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Lauder nominated chairman of Presidents' Conference

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK — Billionaire businessman-philanthropist Ronald Lauder, who managed to convince American Jewish leaders that he did not underwrite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 1996 election campaign, has been nominated as the next chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Neither Netanyahu nor Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Presidents' Conference, influenced the committee, one source said. Some of the members of the committee said privately that they are concerned about Lauder's cozy relationship with Netanyahu, and noted that it was Lauder who connected the prime minister with Republican media consultant Arthur Finkelstein.

Lauder, a former US envoy to Austria, became head of the Jewish National Fund two years ago, and is an official of the World Jewish Congress. He is the single largest benefactor of Jewish schools and youth programs in Central and Eastern Europe, where he also has substantial media and other business interests.



Ronald Lauder (Isaac Harari)

Lauder, who also is heir to the cosmetics concern Estee Lauder, will replace Mel Salberg at the Presidents' Conference. The full conference is expected to consider the nomination within 30 days. Traditionally the conference accepts the committee's recommendation.

The conference was once the pre-eminent organization in American Jewish life, and served in the last four decades as a go-between, representing a unified Jewish voice, when relations between Jerusalem and Washington were strained. However, with more than 50 organizations as members — many of them minor, it is an unwieldy bunch that, since Oslo, increasingly finds it difficult to reach a time-

ly consensus on issues. And because many member organizations reserve the right to speak for themselves, it cannot claim to represent "unified" Jewry. In fact, member organizations appear to be competing among themselves as more open offices in Washington, and some of the most aggressive voices on the Left, such as the Israel Policy Forum and the New Israel Fund, shun the conference altogether. An editorial in the weekly *The Forward* recently suggested that the conference may have "outlived its usefulness."



Statesmen and Nobel laureates here for a Peres Peace Center conference join hands yesterday in Ramallah. From left: Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former Costa Rican president Oscar Sanchez Arias, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, MK Shimon Peres, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and former South African president F.W. de Klerk.

In first address by Israeli to PA council:

Peres voices support for Palestinian state

By BEN LYMFELD

Seeking to convince themselves and others that the peace process can be resuscitated, the architects of the Oslo agreement and an array of international luminaries came together yesterday for a peace gathering in Ramallah that rapidly became a show of support for Palestinian statehood.

Labor MK Shimon Peres, in the first address by an Israeli to the Palestinian Legislative Council, told its members and more than a hundred international figures affiliated with the Peres Center for Peace that "it is our deep hope not only that the Palestinian people will gain independence, but it is our common interest to see a Palestinian state take place as a result of an agreement — a state that lives democratically and flourishes economically."

The wording appeared to be a nudge to the Palestinian Authority not to declare statehood unilaterally on May 4, a step that would likely boost Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu two weeks before the election. Government officials said in response that it is "customary in a democratic coun-

try that security and foreign policy are discussed only at home." They further said that it is "unthinkable for a member of the opposition to criticize the standing government outside the state."

In a coup for both Peres and the PA, former Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev also made a speech. Former South African president F.W. de Klerk and Archbishop Desmond Tutu also attended.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat met later with the dignitaries, criticizing Israel for expanding West Bank settlements and not proceeding with troop redeployments as specified in the Wye agreements. He shed little light on what would happen on May 4. "We cannot let the day pass simply because one of the partners wants to hold it hostage to its narrow, internal calculations," he said.

Some Palestinian legislators predicted little would come of yesterday's gathering and said that several of the visitors, including Peres, became enthusiasts of Palestinian statehood only after they left office.

See PERES, Page 12

PM: Time to loosen our belts

Labor labels turnabout 'election economics'

By NINA GILBERT

Amid charges of election economics, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to the Knesset yesterday to announce he would rescind his plan to cut senior citizens' benefits, and would vote in support of free

Bill would restore employers' health tax, Page 3
PM may back public housing reform, Page 12

come," said Cohen. "He's handing out benefits only in order to increase his chances in the Likud primaries and in the general election."

Netanyahu, who previously objected to expanding free education, last night took part to the Knesset's unanimous decision to reenact the amendment to the Compulsory Education Law.

Under a compromise, the law will be implemented over a 10-year period, and will include 10 percent of children each year, beginning with the weakest sectors of the population. The program is to cost NIS 75 million a year.

The law was first legislated in 1984, but was frozen by successive governments.

Netanyahu said he does not care if his opponents accuse him of "engaging in election economics," since the beneficiaries are society and state.

The prime minister is also reportedly considering supporting the Public Housing Law, which will cost NIS 100 over the next few years.

The sponsor of the law, MK Ran Cohen (Meretz), said Netanyahu is surrendering to the Knesset majority which passed the law, and is afraid of another defeat if he tries to block the law. Under the law, residents of public housing will be able to purchase their homes at sizable discounts and with subsidized mortgages.

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See BELTS, Page 2

Albright opposes Pollard pardon

By HILIEL KUTTNER

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was among those who yesterday submitted recommendations to President Bill Clinton on the fate of Jonathan Pollard. The Associated Press reported that Albright urged Clinton not to pardon the imprisoned spy, but State Department officials would not reveal the substance of her message.

The issue is "now in the hands of the White House," a State Department official said. With the transmittal of the recommendations, the US is "at the end of the beginning phase" of the review, said a White House official. "There will now 'make his decision,' but 'there's no set timetable' for when it will be announced, he said.

The Defense Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency are among the other offices that White

House counsel Charles Ruff had requested transmit recommendations to Clinton.

"The questions that she [Albright] will address from the State Department will be both the generic question of the importance of keeping our nation's secrets and the specific question of what foreign policy considerations, if any, the president should take into account in deciding whether to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

Arens joins race; Livnat stays in Likud

By LIAT COLLINS

After more than six years out of the political limelight, Moshe Arens yesterday officially announced he would run against MK Uzi Landau and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the Likud leadership, claiming his chances of leading the party to victory in the next elections are greater than theirs.

Just hours after Arens' announcement, Communications Minister Limor Livnat held a press conference in the Knesset to say that she is remaining in the Likud and believes it should be led by Netanyahu.

Her announcement that the Likud had always been and would remain her home was met by applause by Likud supporters.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai has still not announced his plans, saying for now he is staying in the Likud but there is still time to move in the future. She called on him to remain.

At a press conference in Tel Aviv, Arens said: "I watched with fear what has happened in the Likud in recent weeks. Top rate people have

left or considered leaving, which could make it more difficult to win." He said many people have recently approached him, even in the street, "saying only I can lead the Likud to victory. In my opinion, my chances are greater than Netanyahu's and Uzi's."

He called on MKs Ze'ev (Benny)

Begin and Dan Meridor, "to return home" saying they are making a "serious mistake."

He made his announcement just hours before the closing time for submitting candidacy.

He did not rule out joining up with Landau in the race against Netanyahu. He later praised Livnat's decision to remain.

Arens is considered responsible for bringing Netanyahu into political and diplomatic life. He refrained from directly attacking him and even praised his work as a former attaché in Washington and as ambassador to the UN.

But he said, "this is not about friendship but about an important decision for the Likud and the state," adding he feels it is his duty to present his candidacy.

See ARENS, Page 2

Balfour Declaration's author was a secret Jew

By DOUGLAS DAVIS

LONDON — Leopold Amery, the author of the Balfour Declaration — the 1917 document from British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour to

Lord Rothschild which laid the groundwork for the establishment of the State of Israel — was a secret Jew.

This has been disclosed in just-published research by William Rubinstein, professor of modern history at the University of Wales, who says Amery hid his Jewish background.

Ironically, one of Amery's sons, John, achieved infamy when he defected to Nazi Germany and was

hanged for treason in London after World War II. The other son, Julian, succeeded his father as a member of Parliament and was a staunch supporter of Israel. He died two years ago.

In his 1955 autobiography, Amery, who was assistant secretary to the British war cabinet in 1917, said: his own father, Charles Frederick Amery, came from an old English family.

His mother, Elisabeth Leitner

See BALFOUR, Page 2



NEWS

in brief

IAF hits Hizbullah targets in Lebanon

IAF planes and SLA cannon yesterday struck at suspected Hizbullah bases in south Lebanon in retaliation for mortar attacks on their positions. There were no reports of casualties. The jets hit Hizbullah targets on the Sujud Ridge, a favorite sight for Hizbullah mortar squads. Reports from Lebanon said the planes fired at least 14 missiles in seven sorties. Earlier yesterday, SLA artillery fired at Hizbullah targets after the village of Roum, near Jezzine, was shelled. At least five civilian cars and two houses were damaged, security sources said. A Hizbullah official in Sidon denied the group had attacked the area. AP reported.

Women in Green stage Hebron protest

The Women in Green yesterday marched along the route taken by two Kiyat Arba women last Monday when they were shot by terrorists on the way to Hebron. The marchers, accompanied by an IDF jeep, visited the kindergarten at Beit Hadassah and presented a gift to attack victim Flori Hori, who had been wounded. The second victim, Fanny Elazra, remains in hospital. Movement head Nadia Matar told Israel Radio the march aimed to highlight security for Jewish residents. Yesterday at 4 a.m. the IDF lifted the curfew and closure imposed on Hebron following the attack. The perpetrators have still not been caught.

School teachers strike this morning

Classes in primary and intermediate level schools throughout the country are cancelled this morning between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. as a result of a teachers' strike. The Primary School Teachers Association has stated that the strike is protesting the non-payment of salaries and missed payments into pension funds by local authorities. This strike follows the strike on Sunday of 80,000 local authority workers over the same issue.

Treasury to hold talks with local authorities

The Treasury has been instructed to meet with local authority heads and resolve the matter of unpaid salaries to their workers. Moshe Leon, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, said yesterday. Leon was speaking during a discussion of the Knesset Interior Committee on the difficulties of the local authorities. He said the first priority is to pay salaries. However, he said the government did not want a bailout for the authorities which he said would only result in the banks halting funding. Committee chairman Micha Goldman called on the government to give loans to the authorities. He also called on the local leaders to cut costs. Fifty authorities did not pay workers last month, and another 80 gave only partial pay.

Mordechai attends Peres Center gala

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who is still mulling his political future, took time out last night to attend the Peres Center for Peace's gala evening in Tel Aviv. Mordechai made no public comment, but his presence was duly noted by the many members of the opposition and foreign dignitaries present.

Women's soccer official stabbed

A supporter of ASA Tel Aviv's women's soccer team last night stabbed and lightly injured the chairman and the coach of rival team Ramle. The incident took place near Tel Aviv University - home of ASA Tel Aviv - after a fight broke out between rival supporters. The two injured men were treated by an MDA ambulance at the scene. The assailant was still at large, according to police.

The Municipality of Jerusalem
mourns the passing of
ZALMAN CHAIM BERNSTEIN

His love for Am Yisrael, advocacy of Jewish Education and Jewish Coexistence, his passion for unity and tireless commitments to Israel and Jerusalem, the Eternal Capital of the Jewish People will be eternally honored and revered.

Our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Bernstein Family.

Mayor Ehud Olmert
Jerusalem City Council
The City of Jerusalem

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With great sadness we announce the passing of our beloved Chairman

ZALMAN CHAIM BERNSTEIN
A man of great vision and deed.

Our heartfelt condolences to his wife Mem, his mother Martha, children Claude, Leslie and Rochel-Leah, grandchildren, and entire family.

The TIKVAH Fund Directors and Staff

Moussa slams gov't peace policy

By DANNA HARMAN

"The Israeli government needs to lower its expectation that its policies are going to work," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa told a large audience of Israeli, Palestinian, and international dignitaries gathered in Tel Aviv yesterday for the Peres Center for Peace's gala event. Moussa said he spoke on behalf of all 150 Arab representatives present when he said the Arab hand was extended toward peace. The question to be asked, however, he said, was why the people of the region are still not able to enjoy the fruits of peace.

"Why hasn't peace become a reality of life? Why have we not managed to close the file of conflict? Why is the term conflict still alive?" he asked, criticizing the recent tendency to overplay every small step forward - like the opening of the Gaza International Airport - for lack of any real substantial progress. "Have our ambitions and dreams for a better future become so limited?" he asked.

Moussa maintained that the years 1993-1996 had been spent going from "one breakthrough to another," but that the years since have been spent in trying to implement agreements already concluded. The situation, he said, is "untenable," and the government, he complained, is not behaving in a way that inspires progress. There is a disrespect toward the Palestinians, he said, which will result in nothing but further difficulties. Moussa put the blame for the

failure squarely on the shoulders of the government, saying all other sides are interested in moving forward, and repeating the line former prime minister Golda Meir once said to former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat: "What took you so long?"

Moussa, like the two speakers before him, former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger and the man introduced as "Mr. Peace" - Labor MK Shimon Peres - said the establishment of a Palestinian state at the end of the final-status talks is inevitable. Moussa called on "us

Staring in Absalom's eyes

BACKGROUND

By AMOTZ ASA-EL

Like King David, who even when fleeing the flailing sword of Absalom could not bring himself to bad-mouth the spoiled, flamboyant son he loved so much, so too Moshe Arens stubbornly refuses to bestir the man he personally led to political stardom. Still, in his deeds if not in his words, Arens is now engaged in a public, and hopeless, attempt to discipline his very own political creation, Binyamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu's debt to Arens is far larger than other proteges to their political patrons. Moshe Dayan owed his political career to David Ben-Gurion. Oan Meridor to Menachem Begin, and Ronni Milo to Yitzhak Shamir, but none of them made it to the very top, let alone within a mere 14 years of public office; and none of them was ungrateful to his benefactor.

As ambassador to the US in 1982, Arens first brought him into the limelight when he took for his deputy the eloquent, right-leaning brother of Entebbe hero/victim Yoni Netanyahu. From there, the way was short to Netanyahu's UN ambassadorship, which would not have hatched if not for Arens' effective lobbying. Without Arens, Netanyahu's famous public-speaking and telegraphic abilities, might never have been fully explored.

Throughout it all, it apparently went without saying that Arens' perception of Netanyahu as his quintessential disciple meant that the latter saw in him his mentor. When he became foreign minister in 1988, it was natural for Arens to appoint new MK Netanyahu as his deputy, and when the Likud lost in 1992, Arens backed Netanyahu's candidacy for party leadership.

And yet, when Netanyahu actually won the premiership, he surprised many by failing to offer Arens a position in his new administration. Moreover, when the Bar-On Affair broke out, Netanyahu even prevented Arens from addressing a Likud gathering.

Before his election, Netanyahu antagonized Arens by spearheading the drive for direct election of the premier, and he has alarmed super-hawk Arens by signing the Wye agreement. Now, in his polite, understated way, Arens has decided to throw down the gauntlet in a somewhat quixotic attempt to undo one of the most effective legacies ever bequeathed by any politician to our public life.

Ostensibly Binyamin Netanyahu appears cool and calm in the face of the challenge mounted against him by his erstwhile political patron, Moshe Arens. In actual fact, he is anything but. He is behaving, according to reports from the Likud, like someone who has recognized, albeit perhaps belatedly, that there is serious trouble at home.

This despite the fact that it will be a major upset if Arens defeats Netanyahu. The universal prediction in the Likud is that he will not.

He will put up a gentlemanly fight in which he will never even once lash out at Netanyahu. It will be conducted according to the nearly forgotten chivalric code of Betar Decorum (Hadar Betari). Then Arens will duly concede his loss and back Netanyahu. He is considered no real threat. Neither is MK Uzi Landau, the first to take Netanyahu on.

But Netanyahu's schedule is not of one who exudes smug overconfidence. He is a very busy man these days. He spends nearly every evening going from one outlying Likud branch to another, as if trying to win his party's rank and file back. He has not yet crossed swords with Labor's Ehud Barak or self-pro-

claimed centrist Amnon Lipkint-Shahak. But he is expanding a great deal of political energy in an as yet largely invisible campaign inside the Likud.

All this is a far cry from the triumphant summoning of the Likud central committee hot on the heels of Netanyahu's return from the Wye summit. He extolled what he presented as an achievement, ignoring the rightist threat to his government.

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was going to issue warnings and draw his proteges' attention to what he preferred not see or what he imprudently failed to see. Arens was not granted a turn at the podium. It is hard to tell whether Netanyahu was even aware that his erstwhile political patron was not given the floor.

The upshot was that Arens did not have his say. It may be that Netanyahu was glad the words of warning were not uttered loudly in public. If they were whispered in private, they could be ignored and forgotten.

Arens, of course, is not the only one Netanyahu would not listen to.

When Limor Livnat voiced protest at cabinet meetings, he behaved like the annoyed husband with an unbearably nagging wife. He told Livnat he had enough of her kvetching (complaints).

Yesterday, however, he could ignore neither Livnat nor Arens. She declared she will not quit the Likud, while just one hour before her press conference Arens put his name on the ballot for the Likud leadership primary. She was in effect throwing in the towel, while he was just picking up the gauntlet.

Yet from Netanyahu's vantage point, both are rebels, even if their respective uprisings were not synchronized. Both wrought him great harm, though in the end they will endorse him. He knows that the opposition will not let the voters forget the fact that even Likud

loyalists like them wished their party were fielding someone else.

Differences in age, gender, and personal style notwithstanding, Livnat and Arens are politically peas in a pod. Both are genuinely ideologically committed and both are well to Netanyahu's right - but their hawkishness is tempered by realism. Both were among his earliest boosters, both harbor no plan to reap profit from his distress or to settle petty accounts, both have heaped scathing criticism upon him and both will stay by his side.

Yet it is one thing to support a candidate with conviction and enthusiasm, and quite another to do so because there is little other viable option. It will be impossible to dismiss their disaffection as arising from diehard extremism (like Ze'ev Begin's) or from searing personal animosity (like Dan Meridor's). The discontent of people like Livnat and Arens therefore injures Netanyahu far more than any abuse which the Likud defectors can hurl his way or than any inective from Barak and Shahak. Livnat and Arens are on his side. This is not cutthroat competition from an outside rival. This is devastating domestic unhappiness.



Old friends

Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger (right) embraces Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai yesterday before their meeting in Jerusalem. Kissinger is here for the Peres Peace Center's Board of Governor's meeting.

Home alone in the Likud

ANALYSIS

By SARAH BOMIG



Moshe Arens (Dan Ossendyver/Israel Sun)



Limor Livnat (Isaac Harezi)

BELTS

Continued from Page 1

Labor MK Shlomo Ben-Ami, one of the sponsors of the free education law, said that even if it passes because of the elections, "at least the public will get some benefit from the four-month campaign."

At a news conference before the vote, Ben-Ami said the Netanyahu government has acted cold-heartedly on social issues, causing a collapse of the welfare and health systems. "Netanyahu's last-hour backing of the legislation is a lack of good faith. It's important that people know this. Given this lack of good faith, it will also not be implemented," he said.

Another sponsor, Meretz's Anat Maor, said it is cynical that Netanyahu "who was dead set against the law, is now implementing election economics." According to Maor, the measure

"is a great advance for working women," and "has become more urgent because of the wild competition from Shas kindergartens."

Tamar Gozansky (Hadash) said the main benefactor will be children who have not been able to go to kindergarten because their parents could not afford it.

The senior citizens' cuts and a two-year freeze in the Public Housing Law are two parts of the government-drafted 1999 economic arrangements bill, now being prepared by the Knesset Finance Committee for second and third readings.

Funding for the measures is not included in the 1999 state budget, which should have been passed by the Knesset by the end of 1998. The state is now operating according to monthly, inflation-adjusted allotments, based on the 1998 budget. "Since I became finance minister, the largest number of appeals I received were from senior citi-

zens," Netanyahu said. "I have decided to withdraw the plan to cut the benefits and have informed the Knesset of this."

Under the measure, senior citizen discounts for television license fees were to have been cut from 50 percent to 25 percent, and pensioners with apartments over 70 sq.m. would not have been entitled to any discount on municipal taxes (armona).

Netanyahu took the opportunity yesterday to appear before senior citizens who came to the Knesset to mark International Senior Citizens Day. "It will be necessary to dedicate more and more resources to senior citizens. I am committed to improve the quality of life of senior citizens," he said. However, at one point some of those in the audience began to heckle him, sparking an angry response. "I do not respond well to catcalls, so stop it and let me speak," he said.

BALFOUR

Continued from Page 1

Both of her parents were Jewish, says Rubinstein, who adds that Amery himself changed his middle name from Moritz to Maurice in an attempt to disguise his origins.

As assistant secretary to the war cabinet, Amery not only drafted the Balfour Declaration, but also was responsible for establishing the Jewish Legion, the first organized Jewish fighting force since Roman times, which proved to be the forerunner of the modern IDF.

Rubinstein, whose disclosures are contained in the February edition of History Today, describes Amery's deception as "possibly the most remarkable example of concealment of identity in 20th century British political history." Rubinstein believes Amery might have hidden his origins to avoid pressure for favors from the Jewish community.

Porat buries bill to cancel direct elections

By NINA GILBERT

Legislation to cancel direct elections for prime minister was effectively buried yesterday, when Knesset Law Committee chairman Hanan Porat said he would insist on an "in-depth discussion" before advancing the bill to a vote on second and third readings.

"This is not the time to complete this legislation. There has not yet been a serious discussion and the committee has other serious issues facing it [before the upcoming dissolution of Knesset]," he said.

If the committee insists on advancing the legislation, Porat said he would not give the bill any "discounts" and would invite experts, hold discussions on all of

its clauses, and take public opinion into account.

The bill passed first reading last month by a vote of 62-57 after its sponsors, Yossi Beilin (Labor) and Uzi Landau (Likud), gave an assurance that the change would only be implemented in the 16th Knesset.

Beilin said he does not see a reason for a long discussion on the bill "unless the committee wants to torpedo it." However, the legislation can be easily buried by Porat, since the committee has about 10 bills on its agenda that have passed first reading and up to 100 bills that have passed preliminary reading.

Today, the committee is to vote on completing the second and third readings

of the government bill that would block Reform and Conservative Jews from sitting on municipal religious councils. It is also to prepare the so-called Golan Heights bill for second and third readings and the necessary referendum bill for first reading.

Porat said that in his opinion a two-and-a-half year trial of a new system is not enough, adding that opposition to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been a factor in pushing forward the bill. "At a minimum we should see how the system works in the upcoming election," he added.

Porat recommended that a thorough discussion be held by the 15th Knesset, especially since the sponsors had asked

for the law to only take effect in the 16th Knesset.

Beilin said he would insist that a vote be held on opening discussions, and said he has a majority to ensure this. He emphasized that a commitment was made to only have the law take effect in the 16th Knesset to prevent a situation in which the rules of the game are changed before an election and could change its results. Beilin noted that in 1992, the law was passed on the eve of elections, when it was decided it would take effect only in the 1996 elections.

"If the legislation is not passed now," Beilin said, "it will be very difficult to pass in the next Knesset." Forecasts indicate that in the next Knesset there will be

a plethora of parties, he noted.

Landau said the bill is only suggesting a return to the previous parliamentary system. "It is not some kind of UFO." He said there is no reason to wait until the next Knesset, because a majority voted to make the change now.

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said the government's position is that since the sponsors want the change to take place from the 16th Knesset, it shouldn't be rushed through now. Instead, he said, the 15th Knesset should hold an in-depth discussion. Netanyahu is one of the main supporters of the new system.

Others who agreed with Porat are Dedi Zucker (Meretz), David Tal (Shas), and Avraham Lazerson (United Torah

Judaism). Tal and Lazerson said they oppose making quick changes to basic laws.

Zucker said the committee has much more important legislation to approve before the Knesset dissolves in mid-March.

Since the law has passed a first reading, it can be carried over to the next Knesset as long as one of its sponsors is an MK, on grounds of continuity.

Former Likud MK Uriel Lynn, one of the sponsors of the original law, told the committee that in lieu of a better solution for reform, direct elections still stabilize the regime. "There has been no serious effort to propose another solution," he added. "Don't forget why we passed this law."

Bill will restore employers' health tax

By JUDY SIGEL

The employers' parallel tax (*mas makbil*), which until two years ago brought in NIS 300 million a year for health services, will be restored if the Knesset passes a bill prepared by the Labor and Social Affairs Committee for first reading.

Sources in the Finance Ministry suggested that the bill was a populist, pre-election proposal, and noted that unemployment would increase because each worker would cost the employer more.

The tax was abolished in a previous Arrangements Law at the urging of the Treasury, which claimed it was a heavy financial burden on employers and discouraged them from taking on additional workers. Employers had to pay 0.35 percent of a worker's salary on which National Insurance Institute fees were calculated.

But even though the Treasury said it would make up the shortfall with allocations directly to the health services, the Health Ministry regularly charged that all the missing money was not being returned to the system.

Although Health Minister Yehoshua Mordechai has frequently criticized the Treasury for cancelling the tax, last night he voiced his opposition to its restoration, claiming the committee's initiative is "populist" and that other arrangements have been made to

increase the health budget.

The committee, headed by Maxim Levy (Gesher), voted not only to restore the tax but also to cancel the October 1998 regulations that require patients to pay a user's fee for visiting a specialist and to pay more for medications.

Levy said that the regulations and the abolition of the tax put a heavy burden on the elderly and chronically ill with low incomes, in violation of the spirit of the National Health Insurance Law, which went into effect four years ago. The bill was proposed by Amir Peretz (Labor) and Aryeh Deri (Shas).

Health Ministry Director-General Gabi Barabash said that he would welcome a return of the parallel tax, as it would restore a major sum for health services. However, cancelling regulations that would abolish the extra user's fees would be complicated, he continued.

Barabash and representatives of the health funds said that the bill must clearly state that the regulations on user's fees that went into effect three months ago must continue, even if the bill passes.

But the Treasury, as expected, vigorously opposed the proposal. Haim Peltz, of the budget department, said that restoring the tax would "not help over the long term, since the government in any case intends to expand the basket of health services."



'Eggoz' memorial

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, examine a model of the illegal immigrant ship 'Pisces' at yesterday's annual memorial ceremony on Mt. Herzl. The couple is flanked by model builder Avraham Cohen (left) and community activist Sam Ben-Chetrit. Forty-four persons died when the 'Pisces' sank off the coast of Morocco in January 1961 carrying Jews seeking to escape to Israel. Twenty-two of the bodies have since been recovered and reburied on Mt. Herzl and at yesterday's ceremony Netanyahu pledged to do everything he can to bring the remains of the other 22 here for reburial. (Hana Hersh)

Deri agrees to have immunity lifted

By LIAT COLLINS

Shas leader Aryeh Deri yesterday agreed in writing to his parliamentary immunity being lifted so he can stand trial on charges of breach of trust relating to what is known as the "public case" against him.

He has yet to finish a "private" case on misuse of funds for personal use.

Deri sent a letter agreeing to the move to Coalition and Likud whip Meir Sheetrit in his capacity as deputy chairman of the Knesset House Committee.

The "public case" concerns allegations that he used his position as Interior Ministry director-general and later as minister to channel funds to Shas-affiliated non-profit groups.

By complying with the Attorney-General's request that his immunity be lifted, Deri has done away with the need for the continued committee debate and a plenum vote.

According to Sheetrit, Deri does not consider it right to bother the MKs with the issue at this time when they are busy with the elections.

In the letter, Deri wrote he is convinced the truth of his innocence will come out either in a hearing or in court.

"It is clear there has never been such an indictment in the history of the State," Deri wrote.

In June, the Knesset House Committee rejected Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein's request that it immediately vote on lifting Deri's immunity so he could face the "public" trial charges.

Deri had asked for extra time to prepare for another trial but made it clear he would not try to avoid the court case as Rubinstein feared.

ON THE RECORD

• He was not happy to hear it. — Moshe Arens telling a press conference how Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had reacted when he told him of his decision to run against him for the Likud leadership.

• He was an excellent diplomatic attaché in Washington — one of the best ever — and perhaps the best ambassador to the UN... [but] not everybody who was diplomatic attaché in Washington is fit to lead the Likud. — Arens on Netanyahu.

• As [MK Ze'ev Ben-Nuri] begins said, 'Quality of life is very important but life itself is more important.' — Arens explaining why he would not relate to socio-economic issues at the press conference.

• Politics is the art of the possible. — Communications Minister Limor Livnat at the press conference announcing she is remaining in the Likud.

• Who doesn't go to a Rabbi these days for an election blessing? — Rishon LeZion Mayor Pinel Kabalo, on the subject of his own rabbinical blessing and how amulets should be used in the upcoming election.

Likud candidates can spend up to NIS 100,000

• Likud legal advisor Eitan Haberman said yesterday that candidates running for party leadership can spend up to NIS 100,000. The amount was determined according to the period of time left to the internal elections for the leadership — two weeks.

Moshe Arens who yesterday announced his intention to run against Benjamin Netanyahu had intended putting out more, and described the sum as "very small."

In the course of normal elections there is a nine-month period leading up to the elections and consequently a much greater sum is permitted.

The Likud central committee is due to meet today to discuss how to formulate the list for the general election.

• Coalition and Likud whip Meir Sheetrit said yesterday if he is not offered the Finance Ministry portfolio in two days, he would reject it

ELECTIONS NOTEBOOK

By LIAT COLLINS

if offered later. The Yisrael Ba'aliya party is objecting to the appointment because it is up with social legislation and the status of new immigrants.

Sheetrit is being wooed by the new as yet unnamed "centrist party" among others.

• The struggle between the two immigrant lists heated up yesterday when Yisrael Ba'aliya took Avigdor Lieberman, head of Yisrael Beiteinu, to court claiming he had tried to bribe their councilor in Netanyahu. Yisrael Ba'aliya said their councilor Lena Kim was offered the municipal

absorption portfolio if she defected to Lieberman's party.

The court rejected the charge that Lieberman had been involved in the municipal coalition wrangles.

• Channel 2 last night reported that the phones had been cut off to at least two Labor party offices — Jerusalem and Haifa — because of unpaid Bezeq bills. A Labor spokesman responded that the debts to the phone company stemmed from the municipal elections and would be soon corrected.

• Meretz secretary-general Hanan Erez is considering running against Yossi Sarid for the party leadership. Sarid on Sunday said he welcomed the competition of others who feel they could better contribute to the party. MK Dedi Zucker is also apparently considering running.



The World WIZO Executive extends greetings to the leaders of WIZO Federations throughout the world who have gathered in Tel Aviv for the World WIZO Plenary Session - January 11-14, 1999.

Programme Highlights:

Major General Uzi Dayan - Deputy Chief of the IDF General Staff.

Professor Jacob A. Frenkel - Governor of the Bank of Israel: "Globalisation and the Israeli Economy: Challenges and Opportunities."

Adv. Naomi Liran - Director of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women.

Panel: '50 Years of Ingathering the Exiles - Israel's Challenges, past, present and future.'

Panelists: Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Adv. Moshe Shachal, Dr. David Ochana, Dr. Tikva Laker, Prof. Yehuda Shenhav.

Professor Asher Sasser - Dayan Institute: "Peace in the Middle East, Israel, the Palestinians and the Windows of Opportunity."

Brigadier General Orit Adato - Head of the Women's Divisions of the IDF: "The Situation of Female Soldiers as we Approach the Year 2000."

Panel: 'The Importance of Informal Education: the Contribution of WIZO's Youth Clubs'

Panelists: M.K. Meir Shitreet, Judge Galit Vigotsky Mor, Avraham Hama.

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22,23	Yolande Snath	Britain	Blind Faith
25,26,27	Urs Dietrich	Germany	An der Grenze des Tages
29,30	Incorporación Danza	Spain	F.G.L. (Oidos de Lorca)

Tel Aviv Cinematheque - Dance Films

5-30 Cinematheque Tel Aviv Chris Nash / Britain

7-30 Suzanne Dellal Centre / Goethe Institut 30 Years of Dance Theatre in Germany

Exhibitions

NEWS

in brief

Rape suspect remanded for week

Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday remanded a man suspected of raping a call girl last month. Police are checking if the suspect also is responsible for a series of rapes in Tel Aviv last summer.

Judge Hanan Efrati ordered that the man, who was arrested on Sunday, be remanded until next Monday and barred the press from publicizing any details that would identify him. The police had asked that the man be remanded for 12 days so that it could have analyzed the results of laboratory tests and complete the investigation. The man also is suspected of interfering with the police investigation and possessing drugs.

On December 13, a call girl was raped in her Ramat Gan apartment. The rapist left behind his baseball cap, which police displayed, along with a composite picture of the suspect, at a press conference two weeks ago.

Heidi J. Gleit

Academic named head of arms control

Ariel Levite, a well-known academic involved with the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, has been named the head of international security and arms control bureau of the Defense Ministry, the ministry announced yesterday.

Levite, 45, has served as a member of the steering committee to the multilateral peace talks on arms control and regional security. Since 1992 he served as deputy head of the bureau.

Arieh O'Sullivan

Infant abandoned in capital hospital

An infant was abandoned at Jerusalem's Bikur Holim Hospital yesterday, Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said. The days-old baby girl is in perfect health and was handed over to child welfare. Police said the mother is probably Arab and have opened an investigation into her whereabouts.

Amy Klein

Hebrew Academy rules: It's 'aero'

The Hebrew Language Academy met yesterday to decide on whether to call the European Union currency a "euro" or an "aero."

The academy accepted the claim that the right name for the currency should be "aero" and not "euro," as the media have inadvertently referred to it.

The academy agreed to call the currency by the name derived from the European continent, which in Hebrew is Aeropa.

Since the pronunciation "euro" is not used by any of the states using the currency in Europe (only by England, which is still outside the currency), some Israeli journalists were already calling it the "aero" before yesterday's ruling.

Itim

Goldman: Stop dumping near Modi'in

Knesset Interior and Environment Committee chairman Micha Goldman yesterday demanded a halt to the dumping of hazardous medical waste at the Modi'in site. He called for resources to be allocated to immediately remove the medical refuse from the site.

He said he also expects the Environment Ministry to file a complaint with police over the dumping.

Nina Gilbert

Moskowitz group begins search for 'ideal candidate' to support

By ELI WOHLGELER

Controversial Miami Beach philanthropist Dr. Irving Moskowitz and a group of 16 other financiers and politicians conducted the first five of his many planned meetings with MKs yesterday, their first day in the country.

The visit is meant to explore the political situation so the group can decide whom to support.

The group met with Likud MK Uzi Laodau, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (The Third Way), Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush (United Torah Judaism), Moledet MKs Rehavam Ze'evi and Benny Elon, and Education Minister Yitzhak Levy and fellow National Religious Party MKs Hanan Porat, Tzvi Hendel, and Nisim

Slomiansky.

"We're trying to figure out if someone would be an ideal candidate for prime minister," said one member of the group.

"Landau is a brilliant guy. He's got good ideas, but he has no charisma."

He's like an old schoolteacher that everybody hates. He'd never win the vote, he doesn't appear to be likable. That was the general consensus among all of us.

"Benny Elon and Gandhi [Ze'evi] were very impressive; Kahalani really [waffled] quite a bit on the issue of Palestinians wanting to murdering Americans. Representative Mike Forbes [R-Long Island] was pressing him on the issue: Porush spoke only Hebrew to the group, which some were not able to follow."

The group arrived at 8 a.m. yesterday and ran from meeting to meeting, the

source said. "People are fading away fast," he said. "I don't know how the older generation does it — some people are close to 70 years old, and they're moving around. The younger people are willing away."

The group will have another full day today, including a meeting with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu this morning, followed by one with Likud MK Limor Livnat.

Earlier in the morning, Moskowitz will escort the group on a tour of his real estate property in eastern Jerusalem, in an apparent bid to attract others in the group to invest with him in the properties.

Moskowitz said the reason for this trip, first reported in *The Jerusalem Post*, is that "I feel that as a Zionist who has properties in eastern Jerusalem, I want to go and see for myself what's happening, and

all the people who are living on the properties, if they're safe."

The property includes the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva complex in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, the Beit Orot Yeshiva on Mount Scopus, the Shepherd Hotel in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, a plot of land in Abu Dis, and Ras al-Amud, the 14-dunam (3.5-acre) plot of land on the southwest slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Other meetings are planned with Agricultural Minister Rafael Eitan (Moledet), and Likud MKs Ze'evi (Benny) Begin and Michael Kleiner.

The group is also to meet with former chief rabbi Avraham Shapira and Mordechai Eliahu, and representatives of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza and the Women in Green and Amana organizations.

High Court: Haifa Religious Council must meet

By AMY KLEIN

The High Court of Justice yesterday ruled that the Haifa Religious Council must meet within seven days. It was responding to a petition submitted last week by the Reform and Conservative members of the council and the local Meretz branch.

The petition challenged Religious Affairs Minister Eli Suissa's decision to cancel a council meeting scheduled for last Wednesday.

The court assessed Suissa NIS 30,000 in court costs. The court said the outgoing director of the council, Yitzhak Getz, must issue invitations today for the meeting, which must convene before next Tuesday.

The ruling was given hours after Conservative and Reform members demonstrated outside the Knesset to protest a so-called High Court bypass law which would prevent them from sitting on religious councils. The Knesset Law Committee will meet again tomorrow to discuss Meretz MK Dedi Zucker's 2,400 reservations to the law.

Suissa had told the court he was waiting for the Knesset to finalize the bypass legislation before he convened the Haifa council.

Justices Mishael Cheshin,



Members of the Conservative and Reform movements demonstrate outside the Knesset yesterday. They are holding signs reading, "All Jews are equal before God" to protest a High Court bypass bill which would prevent them from sitting on religious councils. (Brian Heller)

Yitzhak Zamir, and Dorit Beltrish unanimously ruled in favor of the plaintiffs — Anat Freund, Jonathan

Friedman, and Meretz. Rabbi Uri Reggev, director of the Reform Movement's Israel Religious Action Center, said he hopes the decision will open the

door for religious councils with Reform and Conservative members around the country to be able to convene.

"The lesson for the religious

affairs minister and for the attorney-general is that the High Court will rule in favor of the law and not those who contradict it," Reggev said.

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Security at Wall beefed up

By AMY KLEIN

Police have beefed up security around the Western Wall following warnings about a terror attack in the area. Jerusalem's police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said yesterday.

Police were warned about two weeks ago that a militant Islamic group planned to attack the Western Wall, possibly using grenades, Ben-Ruby said.

Dozens of officers have been stationed in areas surrounding the Wall, including rooftops and alleyways.

Ben-Ruby would not disclose more specific information on the warnings.

Security officials were tipped off

to another possible attack on the Wall several months ago. After police and security officials toured the Old City and reviewed security measures there, they decided to increase manpower and surveillance around the holy sites.

Last week, following the detention and deportation of the apocalyptic cult suspected of planning an attack in the Old City — possibly the Temple Mount — police announced that closed-circuit TV cameras and other devices would be installed in the Akra Mosque compound to increase security.

During a special ministerial meeting on security measures for the millennium last month, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani

requested an increase in the police budget and manpower for the upcoming year to prepare for millions of tourists expected. Some 4.5 million tourists are expected this year and 2 million-10 million in 2000.

Police remain on alert for other dangerous cultists who want to come to the capital.

A heavy police presence will guard the Temple Mount this Friday, when about 300,000 Moslems are expected to come to pray there in honor of the last Friday of Ramadan. Some 200,000 Moslems came to the Mount last Friday, for the penultimate week of Ramadan prayer.

Itim contributed to this report.

Katz charged with kidnapping boy

By HEIDI J. GLEIT

Or Katz was charged yesterday in Tel Aviv District Court with kidnapping Ro'i Bar-Sadeh in order to extort NIS 200,000 from his mother.

A psychiatric evaluation of Katz found that she is fit to stand trial, but Judge Amichai Dweck agreed to postpone a decision on the matter until she underwent another evaluation by a psychiatrist chosen by the defense. That evaluation is to be completed by Sunday afternoon, when the trial is scheduled to resume.

Meanwhile, Katz will move from Aherbanel Hospital to a jail. The warden will be informed of her precarious mental state and she will be provided with any medical assistance needed, Dweck ruled.

The court remanded Katz until the end of the legal proceedings against her, as Hanna Gilboa, of the Tel Aviv District Attorney's

Office, had requested. Gilboa said that Katz poses a danger both to society and to herself. Gilboa noted that Katz had tried to injure herself with a kitchen knife after she was arrested and that a psychologist who had been treating her had testified that she was unstable and impulsive.

According to the charge sheet, Katz, 35, of Herzliya, had once been a friend of Bar-Sadeh's mother, Shura Sadeh. Katz decided to kidnap Sadeh's 11-year-old son, Ro'i, after she ended the friendship and refused to renew it.

On January 3, Katz approached Ro'i, who recognized her from the time she had been a friend of his mother, as he was leaving school in Ramat Hasharon and asked him to help her prepare a surprise party.

Katz, who was riding a motorcycle, told Ro'i to follow her on his bicycle. Bar-Sadeh managed to lose her, but she found him again and forced him to get on her

motorcycle.

She took him to the Ramat Hasharon home of her ex-husband Benny Cohen. Katz bound Ro'i, told him she would shoot him if he made any noise, and locked him in a windowless room in the basement.

Katz later returned to the room to record Ro'i's voice. In the cassette, she demanded NIS 200,000 and said that Ro'i's future would be uncertain if she didn't get the money by a certain time. She then left him in the room, without food or water.

Cohen found Ro'i some 30 hours after Katz had locked him in the basement. He had gone to look around in the basement after his housekeeper complained to him that it smelled of urine.

Nearly 500 police, soldiers, and volunteers had searched Ramat Hasharon and the surrounding areas during the two days Ro'i was missing.

'Jesus boat' Vatican exhibit makes waves

A holy row broke out in Israel yesterday over plans to move a relic known as the "Jesus boat" from a preservation pool on the shores of the Sea of Galilee to the Vatican for a millennium exhibition.

Members of Kibbutz Ginosar where the 2,000-year-old boat — missing its bow, stern and sides — was discovered in 1986 and is now displayed, said the move would wreck the artifact and the lakeside collective farm's lucrative tourism industry.

The Education Ministry and Labor MK Avi Yehezkel joined the chorus of protests, demanding that the Antiquities Authority, which has been negotiating the exhibition with the Vatican for the last three years, not rock the boat.

"It is an incredible and wrong decision," Yehezkel, chairman of the Knesset's subcommittee on tourism, told Israel Radio. "It will hurt tourism to Israel and it will damage the boat itself."

Amir Drori, head of the

Antiquities Authority, countered that an international group of restoration experts had determined that no real harm would come to the vessel by moving it.

He said the boat, which experts date to the first century but have never directly linked to Jesus, would be on display at the Vatican for three months only during the winter of 2000. The boat, Drori said, would return to Israel in time for an expected summer influx of millennium pilgrims. (Reuters)

1250 من الأصل



Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani meets with members of the Four Mothers group yesterday in Jerusalem. (Rona Ne'eman)

Kahalani denies accusations of pre-election Lebanon escalation

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani yesterday refuted accusations that certain cabinet ministers are contemplating an escalation in Lebanon as an election ploy, calling the charges "a lie."

He told a meeting with members of the Four Mothers group in Jerusalem that "There is an attempt to harm someone from within the cabinet, and an attempt to represent elements in this cabinet as seeking to carry out attention-grabbing actions before the elections. This is a lie."

He called this "an attempt to say that we are dictating steps to the army, at a time when generally it is the army that selects the actions it has to perform."

Rahel Ben-David, a member of the group that is calling for an immediate pullout from Lebanon, said that Majid Kazamal, the father of one of the 73 soldiers killed in the 1997 helicopter collision over She'ar Yashuv, received a letter from Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, in which Nasrallah asked to meet with the bereaved father.

In a recent letter which Kazamal sent Nasrallah, he raised the issue of stopping Hizbullah's attacks in order to bring an end to the spilling of blood on both sides.

"It is the second time in the last three months the Four Mothers group has met with Kahalani, who is in favor of withdrawing troops from Lebanon."

Kahalani said that if the government was to decide on a withdrawal from Lebanon, it could be carried out quickly. "It is easier to withdraw from Lebanon than to enter it," he said. (Idit)

Japanese FM presents Lebanon pullout plan

Sharon: We welcome Japan's involvement

By DANNA HARMAN

Visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura, launching a Japanese mediation effort in this region, presented Israel yesterday with a four point plan for withdrawal from Lebanon.

The plan, which sets out the need for Israeli forces to redeploy from southern Lebanon as a step towards a comprehensive peace in the region, does not mention assurances for security of the north. It does suggest that the "parties should discuss" the withdrawal, albeit "without any preconditions."

Masaki Okada, a spokesman for Komura, said that both Syrian President Hafez Assad and Lebanese Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss have seen the plan, and although it is not completely acceptable to them, they both encouraged the Japanese to go forward with their efforts to advance it.

Okada added, however, that in the meeting with Assad, the Syrian leader said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had "sabotaged" the Syrian-Israeli tract, and that nothing could move forward as long as he is prime minister. Asked if Assad related to the upcoming elections in this country, Okada said that he had, but would not relay what had been said.

In addition, while Komura tried to convince Assad to get back to the negotiation table without preconditions, Assad struck by his position that talks could resume from the point at which they were cut off three years ago. Okada said, Israel maintains that while any earlier understanding "will be taken into account," there are to be no preconditions.

Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who both met with Komura yesterday in Jerusalem expressed interest in the Japanese four point plan.

"I was very impressed by Foreign Minister Komura's suggestions in regard to a solution in Lebanon. There is no doubt that we have great interest in his proposals, and I suggested to Mr. Komura that if he has the



Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon in Jerusalem yesterday. (AP)

time...we would be willing and would be happy for Japan's mediation in our attempts to reach an agreement in Lebanon," said Sharon.

Sharon welcomed Japan's desire to become more involved diplomatically in the region and praised Japanese involvement, which up until now, has mainly been in the form of financial donations to both the Palestinians and the Jordanians.

The Japanese are one of the most generous donor countries to the PA, giving large amounts of aid to infrastructure and development projects in both the West Bank and Gaza. At the donor conference in Washington DC some months ago, Japan pledged to give

the PA \$200 million over the next two years. In addition, they have heavily funded Jordanian projects, including joint Israeli-Jordanian initiatives, like the development of the border crossings.

In a meeting with Netanyahu earlier in the day, Komura assured the prime minister that the vast sums given to the Palestinians were closely monitored, and were not going towards arms purchases.

"We see the Japanese activity in the region as a major contribution to the welfare of the Palestinians, and as such, as a contribution to peace in the region," said Effi Ben-Matityahu, a spokesman for the foreign ministry.

Efrat, Wadi Nis build joint pediatric center

By MARGOT DUDKOWITZ

A joint project by Palestinians in Wadi Nis and settlers in Efrat, promoting peace and coexistence between neighbors, has finally borne fruit, resulting in the opening of a pediatric center and nursery school.

The center, which opened in September, caters to village children three to six, while the finishing touches for a doctor's clinic next door are under way.

Efrat Chief Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, who instigated the project, envisions future a large medical complex that will be staffed by Palestinians and Israelis and will serve residents of both communities.

Settlements are a path, not an obstacle, to peace, insists Riskin, who explained that he conceived the idea of a nursery center several years ago.

The relations between the two communities, however, stretch back to the years preceding the intifada, he added. "While I fight zealously for the expansion of Efrat and the right of Jews to settle in Judea and Samaria, I believe in coexistence and friendship with non-Jewish neighbors - if they have no intention to harm us."

Fifteen years ago, when the IDF suggested building a fence between the two communities, the village mukhtar approached Riskin and quoted a verse from the Koran, that also appears in the Book of Proverbs: "A good neighbor is more important than a far-away brother."

The mukhtar asked Riskin not to agree to a fence being erected and assured him that peace would be maintained.

The winding road leading to the village, situated on a hillside behind Efrat, is a short drive away. Riskin's car is recognized by the villagers, who wave cheerfully. Waiting to greet Riskin is the center's director, Salah Yussuf Ibrahim.

Apart from funds procured by Riskin, the mukhtar also assists in obtaining funds, oversees construction, and buys the necessary materials, Ibrahim said.

At the entrance to the center is a plaque reading: "Pediatric Center dedicated by Marc Rich Foundation in Switzerland."

Riskin said the villagers came under pressure from extremists in the Palestinian Authority, who opposed a plaque stating the project is testimony to the peaceful relations between Efrat and Wadi Nis, and therefore an agreement was reached on the present plaque.

"Now a doctor comes to the village every Wednesday and treats residents," said Ibrahim. In addition the locals often go to Efrat and are treated by the community's doctors, he added.

A separate account provided for the village residents has been set up with funds donated by philanthropists from the US and Europe who support and encourage the project and are willing to assist, said Riskin.

"Most of the villagers have no medical insurance and there are some families who are unable to exist on the meager earnings provided by husbands," he said. "I don't think we have ever felt that we are being taken advantage of."

"I am not sure on the political level the other side has the same views, but there is no doubt that the villagers support the project."



Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (right) and Salah Yussuf Ibrahim in front of the new pediatric center in Wadi Nis. (Imad Harezi)

Bottoms up: Fresh juice is still healthy

By JUDY SIEGEL

There is no danger in drinking fresh fruit and vegetable juices squeezed in kiosks while you wait, as long as the person behind the counter has clean hands, the Health Ministry stressed yesterday.

The ministry tried to reduce the public alarm caused yesterday when Yediot Aharonot published on its back page a large-headlined story claiming that such juice was "liable to endanger health."

The ministry was somewhat concerned only about bottled juice that had not been pasteurized, but this constitutes only a tiny percentage of juice sold in store-front kiosks. The vast majority sold at stands is squeezed in front of the customer and consumed on the spot in disposable cups.

According to Food Service Division director Dr. Brian

Coussin, the ministry will in April bar the sale of non-pasteurized freshly squeezed juice in such kiosks and stands as a preventive measure following a number of fatalities in the US and England. There have been no such cases in Israel.

These fatalities abroad involved infections by *Escherichia coli* bacteria, which are spread by fecal contact. Acidic environments such as fruit juices promote the growth of these microbes.

Babies, old people and others with weak immune systems are most susceptible to such infections, but in healthy people, they rarely cause anything more than an upset stomach or diarrhea.

Coussin said that juice squeezed at home need not be heated to kill the bacteria as long as the work was done with clean hands and because fewer people were in contact with the juice.

Survey: Better educated medicate themselves

By JUDY SIEGEL

The more years you've spent in school, the less likely you are to go to the doctor when have a minor acute illness. This is one finding of a survey presented yesterday to a conference of over-the-counter medication importers and manufacturers.

The survey, conducted by the Rotem Institute among a representative sample of 644 Jewish adults, found that 52% of those with an elementary-school education who had an acute but minor medical complaint went to the doctor; only 18% of the university graduates did so.

Ze'ev Beeber, managing director of Smithkline Beecham Consumer Health Care/Israel said at the conference that there is a gradual increase every year in the use of OTC drugs, even though the health funds do not subsidize many of

them anymore.

When bothered by a minor medical complaint, 25% on average go to the doctor; 22% take an OTC drug from their medicine cabinet or the pharmacy shelves - and 17% take "grandmother's remedies" they prepare at home. The rest do nothing, waiting for it to go away.

Most consumers - 71% - read the instruction leaflet inside the drug package, while 55% believe that OTC drugs are effective, even though they do not require a prescription.

The most common complaints for taking a non-prescription drug is a headache (35%), cold (33%), and sore throat (25%). Compared to a similar survey conducted here two years ago, Israelis said they suffer less now from headaches (35% compared to 56% then) and sleep problems (7% compared to 21% then).

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Killers of history

War criminal may still be a safe career choice in our allegedly enlightened world. One of the most disturbing images carried by our televisions into the new year was that of the prime minister of Cambodia laughing and joking with a couple of the genocide breed, as if they were long-lost old chums.

In a sense they were — Prime Minister Hun Sen was himself a member of the rebel Khmer Rouge in his younger days, though not long enough to participate, like his honored guests, in the orgy of killing that wiped out almost two million of his fellow countrymen in the 1970s.

Under the Khmer Rouge, Cambodians were killed by execution, torture, hard labor, starvation, and disease. The Pol Pot regime was Hitlerian in its hatefulness, and had it not been brought down by a Vietnamese invasion would undoubtedly have matched the Nazi extermination record.

The world of course vowed "never again" after the Nazis were destroyed. It was only lip service — in Europe left-wing parties, including the British Parliamentary Labor Party, greeted Pol Pot's capture at Phnom Penh with glee in 1975.

Ghosts of death
Over the four years while the killing fields were being tilled in blood, international voices, and the United Nations, remained mostly silent. Even in Israel, where genocide might be expected to strike raw nerves and raise a hue and cry, public opinion remained disgracefully mute, even after the full horrors of Cambodia were documented.

And here we sat again in recent days, watching Hun Sen bantering about old times with Khmer Rouge leaders Kieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, after they left their Thai hideouts to return to haunt the capital city they helped turn to a ghost town 20 years ago.

Only when Hun Sen declared it was time to forgive and forget did some semblance of moral outrage ripple through the outside world.

Should we forgive and forget two million lives — and the lives of their descendants — willfully snuffed out under the leadership of these monsters now sharing idiotic grins with the prime minister?

What has the world come to? Even in backward and inefficient Rwanda the jails are full of accused murderers who must face trial for their part in the 1995 massacre of Tutsis.

World court
The Cambodian government has backtracked somewhat under the furious assault of human rights organizations on Hun Sen's asinine pardon for Pol Pot's lieutenants, but no one is holding their breath for the start of trials.

What is required, to put an end to such offensive nonsense, is justice on an international

scale. In the summer of 1998, 120 governments agreed at a conference in Rome to establish an international criminal court to prosecute people who commit crimes against humanity — a new attempt to beef up the feeble UN international court in the Hague.

However, as is often the case, those most in need of such a court have declined to sign the Rome agreement. From the Asia Pacific region, only Australia and New Zealand agreed to join the initiative. In their part of the world, these would be the two least likely to need additional instruments to administer justice.

Asian states like to cite stability or harmony for turning a blind eye to the crimes of their former rulers. "Asian values" is another cliché much favored by the Chinese.

Asian culture is one thing — values are universal, which is why we have a universal declaration of human rights and a UN charter to enshrine these values.

If Asian values are so different, one has to ask why Asian countries accepted the UN Charter. Crimes against humanity are just that. They may also be crimes against Cambodians, or Iraqis, or Tutsis, or capitalist roaders, or whatever the murderous flavor of the season is — but the international community has an interest in such barbarity that goes beyond national or provincial concerns.

Silent bells
The Cambodian government may feel comfortable allowing mass murderers to live normally in the community they decimated, but when humanity as a whole accepts that no justice is just, we may all give up and wait for the man with the machete or machine-gun to turn up on our own doorstep one day.

Cambodia was once a graceful and sleepy backwater, an ancient and bountiful kingdom often compared to France, and indeed loved by the French when they were colonists there. Phnom Penh was an easygoing place of sidewalk cafes and good times. Its evenings marked out by tolling temple gongs and bicycle bells.

That image is gone forever, replaced in our minds by the stark hell-hole of The Killing Fields. Pol Pot and his killers turned the city into a silent, looted, and deserted dump. Vultures hovered on rooftops, only rats and Khmer Rouge fanatics remained when the population was sent off to the paddy fields and the stone age to die.

It was to the architects of his country's destruction, the murderers of its history, that Hun Sen offered "a bouquet" of forgiveness for the new year.

It is despicable, and the world community will be marked as an accomplice if it does not move swiftly to indict these war criminals and lock them up for the rest of their worthless lives.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Clinton tied to enduring legacy

The ghosts of America's martyred darling and maligned villain hover over the impeachment debate

By JOHN F. HARRIS

WASHINGTON — One man was the glimmering star for Bill Clinton's generation of Democrats, the other reigned for decades as its villain-in-chief. Clinton shared a magic handshake with his soon-to-be-martyred hero at age 16.

Thirty-one years later, when a life in politics had made him more understanding of failure and redemption, Clinton spoke with compassion at the funeral of a man he had once disdained.

This week the ghosts of two presidents who defined American politics for so much of the post-World War II era will be hovering over the Senate debate about Clinton's fitness to remain in power: John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

Kennedy's example has echoed all through Clinton's life, from the younger man's early decision to pursue a life in politics to the personal transgressions that lately have placed him in such great peril.

But in what some loyalists fear will be the most painful irony for Clinton, it could be the Nixon legacy that echoes louder. The Republican's Watergate scandal, say historians, infused a deep prosecutorial streak in American politics that may have reached its apogee in the Clinton impeachment.

"We are living in a completely different age that began on August 9, 1974," the day Nixon resigned, said historian Michael Beschloss.

He said the public standards before and after Nixon's "helicopter lifted off the White House lawn are as different as night and day, and presidents have been absolutely on notice since then" that the rules have changed.

The question that is roiling American politics today — just as much as Clinton's guilt or innocence — is whether those changing rules for presidents are justified or fair. And in that debate, the Kennedy and Nixon legacies are still proving their long trajectories.

It was Kennedy who inaugurated the modern era of president-as-celebrity, in which the power of the Oval Office became infused with an aura of glamour and sex appeal. Inspired by the style of Kennedy, Clinton has emulated it in many ways.

He, too, has relied on his fluency at mass communications.

He, too, has prospered with a brand of politics in which the public is invited to identify with politicians as personalities, not merely as government officials.

And even some past and present Clinton advisers have privately speculated that, as the president sought to rationalize his own sexual indiscretions, he may have been emboldened by the example of what historians now say was Kennedy's sexual license.

But if Kennedy's lapses stayed unexposed and unpunished in his lifetime, Clinton's transgressions led to a chain of events that has consumed his presidency. And that doleful reality for Clinton is in part an inheritance from Nixon.

Nixon's Watergate crimes led to the installation of a permanent investigative apparatus in modern politics — in Congress, in the news media and, above all, through the appointment of independent counsels to probe allegations of official wrongdoing.

Before these post-Nixon innovations, many historians agree, it would scarcely have been conceivable that Clinton's dalliance with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky could come to threaten his presidency.

The arguments can be heard daily around lunch tables and on call-in radio shows. Clinton supporters say



Which legacy will echo louder for Clinton — that of Kennedy or of Nixon?

Kennedy showed that personal indiscretions do not diminish a president's greatness. Clinton's foes counter that the Kennedy example shows the dangers of a complacent news media that left serious sexual misconduct — Kennedy's apparent affair with a mafia moll, for example — unknown until after his death.

And the Nixon example, say the Clinton critics, shows how no president should be above the law.

CLINTON himself has in private warned to the argument about whether he is being persecuted by the changing standards for judging private conduct in public officials. At a Cabinet meeting in September, Clinton apologized for his misconduct with Lewinsky.

But participants said he bristled when Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said later that good public policies cannot compensate for private character flaws. By that logic, Clinton shot back, Kennedy could never have been elected president over Nixon

in 1960.

Clinton discussed the Kennedy example in more piquant language on an earlier occasion, according to Dick Morris, his former political consultant and one of the few people Clinton confided in when the Lewinsky story first broke a year ago. The occasion was Presidents Day 1995. An interviewer asked Clinton what he would discuss if he could somehow converse with Kennedy. Clinton responded that he would seek advice on "how to restore at least a measure of the optimism and sense of trust that existed when he became president."

It was only later, according to an account Morris offered in a new edition of his book on the 1996 campaign, that Clinton revealed with a smile what he would really like to ask: "I wanted to ask him, you know, how did you do it? How did you get away with it?"

Thomas Caplan, a friend of Clinton from his Georgetown University days who also knew JFK, agreed that Kennedy's style powerfully appealed to Clinton, but

rejected the idea that Clinton is somehow patterning his life after his predecessor's.

Democrats of Caplan and Clinton's age, no longer children but not yet adults when Kennedy came to power, were permanently influenced by the revelation that not all leaders were the age of grandparents.

"He was a movie star as well as president, and at the deepest level we were affected by the sheer force" of Kennedy's glamour and rhetorical skill, Caplan said. "I think he was inspired by Kennedy's style, but I don't think he's derivative of it. He's developed his own."

But a political style that emphasizes personality and public performance carries its own risks — ones that have landed with force on Clinton.

"You pay a high price for the constant publicity and scrutiny," said Robert Dallek, author of biographies of President Lyndon B. Johnson. "Your character flaws are put on constant display."

White House senior adviser Douglas Sosnik acknowledged that Clinton labors under the JFK legacy, just as much as he is inspired by it. "Kennedy, in both a symbolic and real way ushered in a generation in which television became a dominant force in politics and virtually everything else in American life, and for many people President Clinton is, for better or worse, the son of that generation."

"It's a blessing and a curse," Sosnik continued. Just as some people despise Clinton because they think he represents the moral failings of the baby-boomer generation, so do many others identify with him. "For the same reasons that many people can empathize with his mistakes and forgive him, 30 percent of the country wants to destroy him."

Kennedy's sexual escapades, even after they were exposed after his death, did not diminish his glow in many eyes. In a survey by the Roper polling firm last year, more Americans named him than any other when asked to name the "most effective" president since World War II.

Clinton, say friends, remains vexed by his belief that he is being pursued for lapses that were commonplace among his predecessors. "It's not like he sits around and wallows in it, but he does think the sands have shifted," said one friend who has spoken often with Clinton

since the Lewinsky scandal broke. "He thinks he has been held to a standard that other presidents were not."

CHARLES Peters, editor of *Washington Monthly* magazine and a former campaign aide to Kennedy, said the hostile reactions to Clinton may be in part a matter of style as much as morality.

To many people, Peters believes, Kennedy's affairs carry an aura of romance and James Bond-era cool, while Clinton's furtive assignations with Lewinsky seem more vulgar and embarrassing.

"That's why some people are so angry with Clinton; he's offended their sense of taste," said Peters, who added that the most desirable consequence of the scandal might be a shift away from celebrity-style presidents.

Political consultant Mandy Grunwald, who helped produce the 1992 campaign video that featured the young Clinton's handshake with Kennedy, agreed.

"People will be exhausted by the roller-coaster of the Clinton years, and they'll want somebody boring" in the Eisenhower tradition, said Grunwald. She sees Clinton's predicament as replete with ironies.

"He is neither as reckless as Kennedy nor as malevolent as Nixon," Grunwald said. "I think the saddest legacy could be, just as Kennedy inspired a whole generation of people to public service, a whole generation of people are turned off because of this scandal."

Mark Penn, a Clinton pollster, drew the opposite conclusion, saying the scandal has shown that voters care more about a president's "public values" than private behavior.

For Clinton, who aspired to Kennedy's legacy, the best hope is that he will be judged with the same leniency he once recommended for Nixon.

He condemned Nixon in his 1974 congressional campaign, and Hillary Rodham served on the House committee investigating the Watergate crimes.

But at Nixon's funeral, on April 28, 1994, he praised his predecessor as a man who never gave up.

"He made mistakes, and they, like his accomplishments, are part of his life and record," Clinton said. "May the day of judging President Nixon on anything less than his entire life and career come to a close." (The Washington Post)

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US planes attack two Iraqi sites

WASHINGTON (News agencies) - US fighter jets yesterday attacked two Iraqi missile sites in the northern no-fly zone in the latest military clash with Baghdad, the Pentagon said.

No damage or casualties were reported on the US side, and the Pentagon said all of the American planes had returned safely to base in incident.

Army Lt. Col. Steve Campbell, a US Defence Department spokesman, told Reuters both incidents had occurred at about 2:45 a.m. Washington time near Mosul in northern Iraq.

In both cases, coalition aircraft were illuminated by Iraqi air defense missile systems, Campbell said. "There was no damage to coalition aircraft, which all returned safely to base and damage to Iraqi forces is currently being assessed."

He said it was not yet clear whether the US had hit the Iraqi targets.

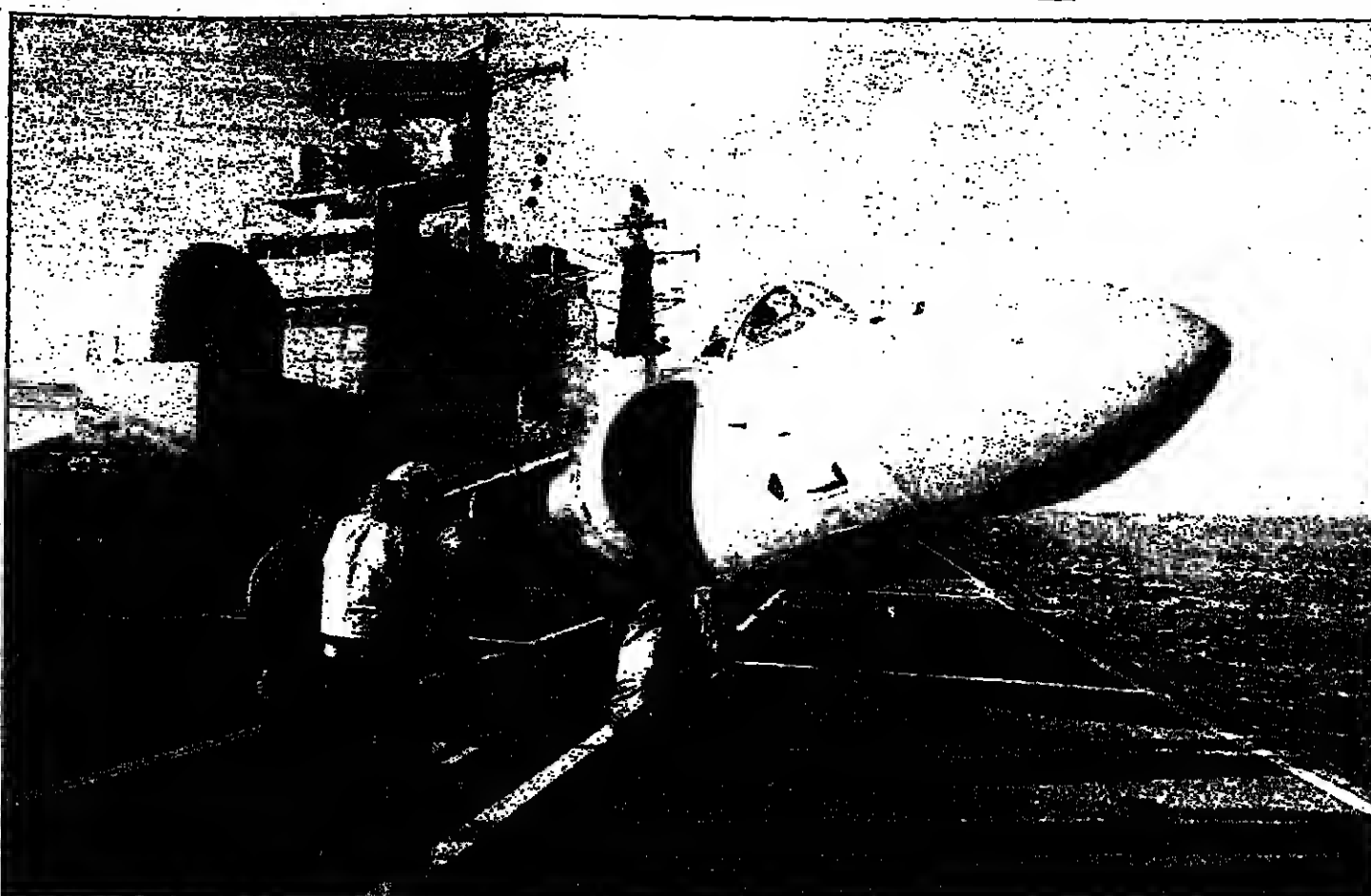
Earlier, Capt. Melissa Morgan, a spokeswoman for the US European Command in Germany, said the air crews had acted in self-defense to suppress a ground-based missile launch site.

US officials said in Washington that American and British planes would continue to monitor the no-fly zones despite Iraqi opposition to the patrols.

It was the fifth confrontation in no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq in two weeks between Iraq and US and British forces. British forces were not involved in the latest clash.

Those confrontations have been increasing since the United States and Britain launched four days of heavy air raids against Iraq last month after Baghdad refused to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors.

Saddam said after last month's air raids that Baghdad no longer



A British deck crew works on a Sea Harrier as another squadron embarks aboard HMS Invincible to prepare for operations in the Arabian Gulf yesterday. (Reuters)

would recognize the no-fly zones, set up after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south from attacks on them by Iraqi forces.

Maj. Joe LaMarca, a spokesman for US Central Command in Tampa, Florida, said there had been four violations on Sunday in the southern no-fly zone and one yesterday, but no clashes were reported.

The latest clash comes in a climate of mounting tension between Iraq and the United States.

Earlier yesterday, US Defence Secretary William Cohen reiterated warnings that Washington was prepared to act militarily if Baghdad threatened Kuwait, other Arab neighbors or its own people.

Iraq's parliament on Sunday passed a resolution calling for further discussions on all UN resolu-

tions on Iraq declared after the 1991 Gulf War. Kuwait said it had put part of its military on full, combat-ready alert in response to Iraqi "threats" to Gulf Arab states.

The decision was made Sunday night at a meeting of Defense Minister Sheikh Salem al-Sabah and military commanders, a ministry spokesman said. He did not specify which units were put on alert.

Iraq's Parliament on Sunday

approved a statement saying Iraq "holds the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes fully responsible for the US and British aggression on Iraq" and reserves the right to seek compensation.

The state-run Kuwait News Agency yesterday said the government is planning to file a formal complaint to the United Nations about this "dangerous Iraqi escalation."



An Albanian woman holds her child as they arrive in Dobrotin village, some 30 km. from Pristina, yesterday. (Reuters)

Kosovo Albanian leader's aide murdered

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) - A key aide to Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova was shot and killed yesterday, hours after Yugoslav's hard-line president set a deadline for rebels in Kosovo to release eight Yugoslav army soldiers.

Ermer Maloku, head of the Kosovo Information Center that reflects the views of the Rugova camp, was attacked outside his home in Pristina and died later at a hospital, said Sandy Blyth of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Maloku was targeted by assassins in November but escaped unhurt. The shooting fueled speculation that it was linked to the rivalry between Rugova and the Kosovo Liberation Army, which is holding the captives and was warned by President Slobodan Milosevic that time is running out before a major crackdown.

In Switzerland, a political representative of the rebels said the KLA might release as early as last night that some of the captives that were seized Friday when their convoy strayed into rebel-held territory.

"We are going to make a step forward, probably this evening," Bardhyl Mahmuti said in Geneva. He said "certain of them may be freed" in exchange for ethnic Albanian forces held by the Serbs.

Knut Vollebaek, Norwegian foreign minister and chairman of the OSCE, warned after meeting Milosevic of major bloodshed in Kosovo unless the KLA releases the hostage sol-

diers immediately.

"I asked for an extension of the time and I was given that by President Milosevic," said Vollebaek from Belgrade, refusing to specify the time limit. "I think that it is very important that the KLA knows that we are very short of time."

The detention of the eight is the latest challenge to the off-and-on cease-fire in Kosovo, where guerrillas are fighting for the Albanian-majority province's independence from Serbia. More than 1,000 people have been killed in the nearly year-old conflict, including a reported five over the weekend.

The KLA has refused an appeal by NATO and others to free the soldiers, demanding the release of their own fighters held by authorities first.

The head of the Yugoslav army, Gen. Dragoljub Ojdanic, arrived yesterday in the provincial capital, Pristina, said an army statement, adding that forces have been put on a higher level of alert.

In the meantime, Yugoslav army tanks are stationed close to Star Trg, where the Yugoslav soldiers have been held, poised for action if talks on their release fail. The government has made no comment on rebel demands.

Intensive negotiating efforts over the weekend by OSCE monitors in Kosovo appeared to have defused tension just when an attack seemed imminent.

Teams of unarmed monitors, who now number nearly 700 in Kosovo, reportedly were in almost continuous contact with both sides.

White House: Charges don't merit removal

WASHINGTON (AP) - The White House argued yesterday that the impeachment charges against President Bill Clinton should be dismissed, saying the accusations "do not permit the conviction" and removal from office of a duly elected president.

But Clinton's lawyers won't force a vote on dismissal at the outset of the trial, officials said.

"The charges in the articles do not rise to the level of 'high crimes and misdemeanors' as contemplated by the Founding Fathers and they do not satisfy the rigorous constitutional standard applied throughout our nation's history," Clinton's attorneys said in response to the Senate's trial summons.

"Accordingly, the articles of impeachment should be dismissed."

In their formal answer to the charges on which Clinton will be tried in the Senate, the president's lawyers said the president "denies that he made perjurious, false and misleading statements before the federal grand jury on Aug. 17, 1998." Further, it said the president "denies that he obstructed justice" either in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case or in the Monica Lewinsky grand jury investigation.

The president has acknowledged that his behavior with Lewinsky was improper, but "the charges in the two articles of impeachment do not permit the conviction and removal from office of a duly elected president," Clinton's lawyers said.

While arguing the charges should be cast aside, the lawyers

have decided not to make a motion before the trial starts requesting dismissal, bowing to Democratic lawmakers' wishes to begin the proceeding in bipartisan fashion, White House officials said.

The officials said the president's lawyers would offer no pretrial motions, and instead were ready to proceed to opening presentations, set for Thursday with House prosecutors.

The officials said the president's lawyers, or a Senate Democratic ally, would likely make a motion to dismiss the charges after those presentations.

The 13-page document released by the White House vigorously rejected the charges against Clinton, addressing the particulars of the two articles of impeachment.

Bosnian Serb President slams NATO arrest bids

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia (Reuters) - Bosnian Serb leader Nikola Poplasen yesterday called on the NATO-led peacekeeping force to stop any actions to seize suspected war criminals, especially if they endangered the lives of innocent civilians.

Poplasen, a hardline nationalist, wrote an open letter to US General Montgomery Meigs, commander of the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), following the shooting of a Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect on Saturday.

Dragan Gagovic, a former police chief in the eastern town of Foca accused of raping and torturing Muslim women during the Bosnian war, was shot dead by

French peacekeeping troops when he tried to run them over as they moved in to arrest him.

"I insist that such actions stop," Poplasen said in the letter to Meigs.

He said SFOR, whose 32,000 troops help secure peace in Bosnia, had violated its mandate under the US-brokered 1995 Dayton accord that ended the 43-month war between Bosnia's Serbs, Muslims and Croats.

Bosnia's Western-leaning government has also reacted angrily to the attempt to detain Gagovic.

More than 20 other Bosnian Serb war crimes suspects indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague are believed to be hiding in eastern Bosnia.

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Blair makes fresh plea for N. Irish disarmament

BELFAST (Reuters) - Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped up pressure for guerrilla disarmament in Northern Ireland yesterday, as Britain held fresh talks to keep a historic peace agreement on track.

Although Irish Republican Army and mainstream pro-British Loyalist guerrillas have ruled out early "decommissioning," or disarmament, Blair pinpointed the scrapping of weapons as a key step needed following last year's accord.

"It is an enormous step forward that the guns are, by and large, silent. That has been vital to the progress we have already made," Blair wrote in a New Year message in *The Irish News* and *The*

NEWS

in brief

Gay Holocaust paragraphs to be sent to teachers

ATLANTA (AP) - Two sexually graphic paragraphs edited out of a teachers' guide about the Holocaust will be sent to Georgia teachers, following a compromise forged between a state agency and gay activists.

The paragraphs, which describe the Nazis persecution of homosexuals, were deleted from the 92-page guide, on advice of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, out of concern it was too sexually graphic for young students.

The deletion angered gay leaders, who urged the commission to reconsider. It was too late to reprint the 6,000 guides, so on Sunday the state agency agreed to send the excised words in a separate letter to all teachers who ordered the guide.

German prosecutors request Le Pen testimony

MUNICH (AP) - Prosecutors said yesterday that they have served French National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen with documents seeking his testimony, in a probe into whether he broke German laws against trivializing the Holocaust.

Prosecutors want to charge Le Pen in connection with his calling the Holocaust a "detail in the history of World War II" at a 1997 Munich news conference with German far-right politician Franz Schönhuber. They have already taken testimony from journalists present.

Le Pen maintains the statement does not deny the Holocaust happened. He could face a maximum of five years in jail if convicted.

Slovak former minister, gas chief shot dead

BRATISLAVA (Reuters) - The former head of Slovakia's gas industry and one time economy minister Jan Ducky was found shot dead outside his home in Bratislava yesterday, a police officer told Reuters.

Ducky served as economy minister in former prime minister Vladimir Meciar's government until mid-1996, resigning his post to head the state gas industry, Slovensky Plynarsky Priemysel.

Mafia assassinations have become an increasingly regular feature of Slovak life since the fall of communism in 1989. It is not yet known whether Ducky had any enemies in the underworld.

Tibetan human rights blast China for abuses

DHARAMSALA, India (AP) - The Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy said yesterday in a 124-page report that there was an alarming trend of tighter government control over all sectors of Tibetan life that threatens the "cultural and physical survival of the Tibetan people."

The report detailed 432 cases where Tibetan women were forced to undergo sterilization or contraceptive procedures. It also said 1,083 Tibetan political prisoners were being held in Chinese jails.

The Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, leads an international campaign for Tibetan autonomy from Dharamsala.

Veteran Kazakh leader claims big poll win

KAZAKHSTAN (Reuters) - Kazakhstan's Soviet-era leader claimed an overwhelming victory yesterday in its first contested presidential election, securing seven more years in charge of the vast Central Asian state.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has led the potentially oil-rich nation since 1989, shrugged off a chorus of Western criticism over his handling of Sunday's poll, to win around 80 percent of the vote. Turnout was a heavy 86 percent.

The result had never been in serious doubt since a court barred Nazarbayev's former prime minister, and only realistic challenger, from taking part in the vote on a technicality.

Mandela's jail invites tourists to spend the night

CAPE TOWN (Reuters) - Tourists will soon be able to spend the night in the notorious island jail where South African President Nelson Mandela was locked up for nearly two decades, under the country's apartheid regime.

Robben Island prison, now a museum, already attracts thousands of visitors each year but is planning to go one step further and offer overnight accommodation as well.

The island's management said yesterday that it plans to convert the former homes of prison wardens and the historic buildings dotting the island into guest houses which should eventually house some 100 tourists per night.

Turkish PM forms stop-gap government

ANKARA (Reuters) - Veteran leftist Bulent Ecevit yesterday became Turkey's new prime minister to steer the country to April elections which are shaping up as a fight between Islamists and the secularist elite.

Turkey had been without an established government since a conservative-led coalition collapsed last November over corruption allegations. In the power vacuum, friction between religious activists and the secularist army has risen.

President Suleyman Demirel gave the nod to Ecevit's minority government, expected to win a parliamentary vote of confidence set for Sunday.

Ecevit, the number two in the pre-

vious government, is a staunch secularist seen by the generals as a safe pair of hands in times of trouble.

He is best known abroad as the man who ordered Turkey's 1974 invasion of Cyprus in response to a Greek Cypriot coup.

The new cabinet is composed of members of his Democratic Left Party plus three independents. It is backed in the national assembly by two rival conservative factions.

Ecevit, 73, urged voters on Sunday not to support the Islam-based Virtue Party in the election on April 18.

"I trust our citizens will realize that the best way to prevent fundamentalism is to use their votes conscientiously," he told TRT state television.

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Free Jonathan Pollard

The American intelligence community vociferously opposes any sort of clemency for Jonathan Pollard - the review submitted yesterday to President Bill Clinton was not necessary to discover that. As each day, week, and year passes, his continued incarceration stretches further beyond that of any other American convicted of the same crime. Though Clinton's decision is reportedly imminent, justice demands that it not be made under the pressure of a Senate trial.

With the prospect of clemency in the air, a new slew of allegations regarding the seriousness of Pollard's crimes has emerged from intelligence officials. Last month, four former chiefs of naval intelligence wrote in *The Washington Post* that Pollard's release would be "totally irresponsible from a national security standpoint." All this agitation, in turn, has inspired Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Richard Shelby to urge his colleagues to write to Clinton in opposition to a Pollard clemency.

The issue here, however, is not whether Pollard's crime was serious - it was. Nor is it in question that he should be punished - he has been. The issue is: After 13 years in maximum security prisons, including seven in solitary confinement, further incarceration of Jonathan Pollard would be a miscarriage of justice. As a January 2 *Washington Post* op-ed by Alan Dershowitz, Irwin Cotler, Kenneth Lasson (all law professors) and Angelo Codevilla (professor and former Senate Intelligence Committee staffer) points out, Pollard was neither charged nor convicted of the crime of treason. "Nor was there anything in his indictment to suggest that he intended to harm America - or that he compromised the nation's intelligence-gathering capabilities or caused injury to any of its agents," the op-ed continued.

As unseemly as it may be, allies spy on each other all the time. When they are caught, the rules of the game dictate that the matter be settled quietly, usually by expulsion. In no case has the punishment for spying for an ally carried anywhere near as harsh a sentence as the one Pollard is serving.

Pollard was charged with one count of passing classified information to an ally, and sentenced to life in prison without parole. The current maximum sentence for this offense is 10 years, and the median sentence is about three years. Pollard, by contrast, is arguably being treated

more harshly than Aldridge Ames, who was held responsible for the deaths of 10 American agents, convicted of treason - and sentenced to life in prison. Ames did not serve for years in solitary confinement, nor was he confined in as harsh a prison environment as Pollard's.

Pollard's life sentence, besides being considerably disproportionate to other sentences for similar crimes, was in gross violation of his plea agreement with the government. Under that agreement, according to which Pollard pled guilty and cooperated with the prosecution, the government pledged not to call for a life sentence. Though two judges on a three-judge panel upheld Pollard's sentence by ruling against his appeal on technical grounds, the third judge found that the government's breach of its plea agreement was "a complete and gross miscarriage of justice."

It is clear that Pollard violated his oaths to secrecy and unjustifiably took the law into his own hands. However, he did so not to harm the United States, but to provide Israel with intelligence that he believed the US should have been sharing with its close ally. In doing so, Pollard harmed that alliance, as did those Israelis who acted recklessly in cooperating with him.

Those who assume that such issues are decided politically, rather than on the merits, assume that Clinton will not want to provide an electoral boost to Binyamin Netanyahu, nor anger senators in whose hands his fate rests. But Pollard's cause is not a partisan issue in Israel, as a rare joint letter signed by Netanyahu and Ehud Barak illustrates. The letter, initiated by Immigration Minister Yuli Edelstein, states, "Concerning Mr. Pollard, the people of Israel and virtually all its political parties stand as one." Political considerations will never lead to releasing a convicted spy, certainly not one so vilified by the US intelligence community. Nor, in fact, should this matter be decided politically in either direction.

The reason to release Pollard is not to please Israel or American Jews, but to do justice. As Dershowitz et al wrote, "Just as the law should not be bent to release Pollard, neither should it be bent to keep him behind bars." No clemency decision is an easy one, but when a man's freedom is at stake, he deserves that the decision be made with the necessary deliberation, and without regard to bureaucratic biases or extraneous political interests.

Litmus test

YOSSI BEILIN

This week's meeting of the Peres Peace Center's board of governors is yet additional evidence of Shimon Peres's determination, and of his continuing belief in the prospects for a "New Middle East."

It is very possible that another man who had been defeated in an election by such a small margin after accomplishing such great things would have retired from

has done. A peace government could improve our relations with our immediate neighbors, and repair our relations with those farther afield, by implementing the Wye Memorandum, opening final-status talks and resuming negotiations with Syria.

Does the presence of these Arab guests at the conference make a political statement? To a great extent, yes. Does this constitute

Peres proudly maintains his positions, which others mock until they themselves adopt them

public life. But not Peres. He never gets discouraged, and continues to proudly maintain his positions, which others mock until they themselves adopt them.

But this meeting isn't simply another of Peres's accomplishments. This gathering is proof of our neighbors' strong desire to find any excuse not to lose their connection with Israel.

Many of those participating in the event had given Binyamin Netanyahu the benefit of the doubt at the beginning of his term, and all have come to the conclusion that he doesn't really intend to continue the peace process.

There has never been such a low point in Egyptian-Israeli relations; our ties with Jordan have certainly known better days, and our links to the Gulf states and the nations in North Africa are hanging by a thread that is poised to tear at any moment.

The fact that many of the Arab countries whose dialogue with the Netanyahu government has died out are nonetheless represented in Tel Aviv, shows that it is possible to repair the damage Netanyahu

intolerable interference in our election campaign? Absolutely not.

There is no doubt that whoever wants peace in our region and in the world is interested in the return of a peace government to Israel. They are not allowed to involve themselves in election propaganda, are forbidden to say they prefer one candidate over another, and must stress that they will conduct a dialogue with whoever wins.

But no serious person would suspect that our pragmatic neighbors don't really care whether Israel's next prime minister is Ehud Barak or Binyamin Netanyahu.

FRANKLY, I would say that this is a litmus test. If Yasser Arafat really wants Barak to win - as Netanyahu has been threatening - it means that Arafat has a real interest in the peace process, and that he prefers this even over a pact with the Americans against Netanyahu. If Egypt and Jordan prefer Barak, this certainly means that they are interested in continuing the process, rather than freezing it.

By contrast, there's no doubt that

Dry Bones



Iran sees a resumption of the peace process in the region as a threat to its relations with Syria, and its refusal to come to terms with the Jewish state remains absolute. Hamas, under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, sees the Oslo process as a disaster for the Palestinians and he surely doesn't want to see the initiators of Oslo returning to power.

The voice that's still missing is that of Syria's Hafez Assad.

In the 1996 elections, it seems to me that he "voted Likud." After those elections, however, he did admit to some of his interlocutors that he had missed an opportunity during the years of the Labor gov-

ernment to reach an agreement with Israel, under which he would have gotten the Golan Heights in exchange for peace, security arrangements, and normalization.

As such, he has become one of the "undecided" voters in this year's elections, and it is possible that even after the polling we will still have difficulty figuring out the preferences of the Sphinx from Damascus.

But with regard to our other neighbors, the picture is clear. The pragmatic camps within them want a peace government in Israel. Just as the Israeli peace camp is interested in the strengthening of these pragmatic elements across our borders.

A legitimate opinion

EVELYN GORDON

When it comes to the Supreme Court, public debate in Israel - if it can be dignified with that name - is depressingly monotonous. As soon as one person decries the court's growing power, someone else promptly demands that the speaker be deprived of some basic civil right.

This time, it was Avigdor Lieberman who began the ritual. At a press conference to announce the launching of his new party last week, Lieberman assailed numerous political and social institutions, of which the court was one.

The elected government has become a marginal factor in running the state, he declared. The state is run by four institutions, far stronger than the government, which operate without coordinating with it and even impose their opinions on it: the High Court of Justice, the State Attorney's Office, the Treasury's budget division and the police investigations division.

In the name of professional independence, Lieberman said, an administrative tyranny has developed. The High Court is more powerful today than the government, and the president of the Supreme Court has more clout than the prime minister. But, unlike the prime minister, one elected him.

The reaction was not long in coming. For a change, no one demanded that Lieberman be indicted. But the very next day, Labor MK Rafi Elul asked the Central Elections Committee to disqualify Lieberman's party, on the grounds that his statements about the judicial

system imply a yearning for a dark and totalitarian regime in which the rule of law plays a very limited role.

These statements, Elul's petition continued, undermine the democratic nature of the regime and the fundamental principles on which Israel is based, and endanger Israeli society.

One does not have to like

anyone who holds the opposite view of trying to undermine democracy. Because Lieberman's opinion is equally legitimate. A court capable of overruling the government is not a sine qua non of democracy.

A decade ago, Israel's High Court did not believe it had the power to overturn an act of parlia-

To deny Avigdor Lieberman his say is undemocratic. What's more, he may bear listening to

Lieberman to find Elul's reaction appalling. After all, the right to run in an election is one of the most fundamental democratic rights, and is therefore not to be lightly taken away.

Lieberman's remarks might be somewhat hyperbolic - the elected government, for instance, is still far more than a marginal player in national affairs - but they are hardly incendiary. Indeed, much of what he says is true: The High Court, for instance, undeniably does have the ability to impose its will on the government; it is also an unarguable fact that its president is not elected.

The only question is whether one perceives these facts as positive or negative. Many people - Elul obviously among them - consider this situation positive. And this is certainly a legitimate opinion. What is illegitimate is accusing

ment. Does this mean that for its first 40 years of existence, Israel was not a democracy?

THE question of how much power the Supreme Court should have is an issue on which legal scholars disagree. No less a person than former Supreme Court president Moshe Landau has been one of the country's leading campaigners against the court's assertion of its right to overturn duly enacted laws. Landau has repeatedly argued that for such a right to be valid, it must be explicitly delegated to the court by a significant Knesset majority.

The two Basic Laws enacted in 1992, on which the current court bases its alleged right, meet neither of these criteria: They do not even mention judicial review, and they were passed with most of the Knesset not even in attendance, by

votes of 32-21 and 23-0.

The question of where exactly to strike the balance between the powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches is a fundamental one for any democracy and every democracy has found its own answer to this question. In fact, most democracies have given their Supreme Courts much less power than Israel's court now has.

Even in the US, where the Supreme Court's right to overturn legislation is unquestioned, the court intervenes on only a handful of issues each year. In contrast, there is virtually no major or minor governmental issue that does not come before Israel's High Court, from the legality of the Oslo Accords to who has the right to serve as a minister to whether yeshiva students should be allowed to defer their army service.

But wherever one believes the balance among the three branches of government should be struck, it is certainly a legitimate issue for an election campaign.

If most voters agree with Elul that Lieberman is dangerous to democracy, then there is nothing to fear from letting him run: He will probably not get enough votes to pass the electoral threshold.

But if his words do strike a chord with voters, then perhaps the system has more wrong with it than the mere presence of a disgruntled ex-public official. And the country would be better served if our leaders attempted to seriously address the issues Lieberman has raised, rather than merely silencing the messenger.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HEARTLESS DEMOLITION

Sir, - A few weeks ago, watching the English news on television, I was horrified and outraged as I along with all the other viewers) witnessed the forced eviction of an Arab family from their home and the demolition of their house!

Within the span of minutes, an entire family was rendered homeless. In the ensuing scuffle, the father was beaten and the camera clearly showed us his bloodied face. As I watched the cold and heartless way in which this demolition was achieved, I felt an overwhelming sense of shame.

Is this the type of behavior we

want to show the rest of the world? Can we justify such action to ourselves and to the world at large? It was said the house was built illegally several years ago.

In fact, the owner of the house had applied for a permit but for some bureaucratic reason (probably known only to bureaucrats) he was denied permission; therefore, the house and its contents were reduced to a pile of rubble.

Who can explain to me this hypocrisy and injustice?

YEHUDIT DAVID

Herzliya.

SPIN OFF

Sir, - Before political discourse deteriorates even further, it behooves Israeli prime ministerial wannabes to send the American spin doctors back home where mud-slinging and gratuitous insults are endemic to political campaigns.

Israeli politicians should aspire to a civil and respectful debate on the very difficult issues facing Israel in the near future.

Or is this hope as unrealistic as the expectation that the Palestinians will finally begin a real and sustained effort to honor their commitments from Oslo through Wye?

FAY DICKER

ILLOGICAL BILL

Sir, - Why on earth would the Knesset want to pass a bottle deposit bill which would raise the price of bottled drinks? Surely the Economic Committee and its members are aware that in many areas of the world, glass, newspapers and aluminum are recycled. This can be done by having these items collected (just like garbage) perhaps every two weeks, and then have them prop-

erly recycled by companies who are familiar with the process. In addition to saving money and valuable materials, it would prevent more and more garbage from being added to unsightly dumps. Think about it - recycling really makes sense!

INGEBORG HIRSCHHORN

Ra'anana

A GOOD JOB

Sir, - In his op-ed article "In need of repair" (December 28), Yosef Goell has joined the chorus of virulent Netanyahu-bashers. While advocating raising the threshold for entry into the Knesset, he could not refrain from heaping gratuitous insults on the prime minister such as calling him a "trickster," who has been woefully misreading the country.

Responsible journalists should

avoid engaging in cheap and one-sided propaganda. A good many Israelis think that Binyamin Netanyahu has done a good job both in the internal and external spheres of government.

As for his credibility, it compares favorably with that of his immediate predecessors.

DR. EZRA MENTCHER

Haifa.

UNFORTUNATE EQUATION

Sir, - Lisa Liel's letter "Courageous stand," (December 28) equating not serving in the IDF with Jews avoiding the Russian army is even less fortunate than Clinton's equating the children of the perpetrators of terror to the children of the perpetrators of terror. The Israeli refusal to serve in the IDF has nothing to do with Torah and Jewish values but is essentially based on the fact that they refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel beyond that of a cow to be milked.

DR. SAMUEL DERSHOWITZ

Jerusalem

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On January 12, 1934, *The Palestine Post* appealed to the government to do more to encourage tourism, especially by improving port facilities and making the passports and customs control more comfortable.

50 years ago: On January 12, 1949, *The Palestine Post* reported that Ralph Bunche, the acting UN Mediator, and US Brigadier-General William Riley, chief of the UN Truce Commission, arrived in Rhodes to arrange for armistice talks between Israel and the Arabs.

At the UN Israel formally demanded that the Security Council investigate the "menacing attitude adopted by the British towards the State of Israel."

Alexander Zvielli

A great novel – in the Bible

A California professor who compared biblical texts concluded that a literary masterpiece – better than anything Shakespeare wrote – lies embedded in the Good Book. John Rivera reports

In the academic world, it is widely believed that the Bible is not a book, but rather a collection of books written by various authors at various times.

Among Bible scholars, it has become common practice to break down individual books further, attempting to discern multiple sources and editors who may have shaped what we now know as works like Genesis, Exodus or Kings.

But Richard Elliott Friedman, a professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, San Diego, is swimming against that scholarly tide.

In his recently published *The Hidden Book in the Bible*, he claims that, embedded in the individual books of the Hebrew Scriptures, is a cohesive literary masterpiece written by one author about 3,000 years ago. He calls it the earliest known prose composition.

That composition, which Friedman says you can call the earliest novel or earliest history – depending on whether you believe it's fact or fiction – is spread out through nine books of the Bible, from Genesis to the first two chapters of Kings.

It covers the creation of the world, the sagas of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to Moses and the Exodus to the court history of kings Saul, David and Solomon.

Originally a cohesive work, it was cut up by subsequent editors, and other stories, poetry and laws were spliced into it and around it.

"I'm not just tossing it around to make points when I say this is a great author like Shakespeare," Friedman says. "This is a great author like Shakespeare. This is in a class with Homer. This is in a class with Dostoyevsky."

"It's as good as any 20th-century novelist. Better! This is greatness."

FRIEDMAN works in a field where the Documentary Hypothesis holds sway. It holds that Moses did not write the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures.

Rather, they were written by four different authors: J, for the Jahwist, who uses the word Jahweh for God; E, for the Elohist, who uses the word Elohim for God; D, for the Deuteronomist, who is believed to be responsible for much of the book of Deuteronomy; and P, for the Priestly author, who focuses on ritual and God's transcendence.

The Jahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly accounts are woven throughout the books of the Torah, according to the Documentary Hypothesis.

Of course, Orthodox Jews and fundamentalist Christians reject this view, believing in the traditional Mosaic authorship.

But Friedman, instead of breaking the Bible down into fragments, has always preferred to look at it as a literary whole.

"Maybe it's the influence of literary studies," he says – he teaches in UCSD's literature department, not in biblical studies or theology.

"In most universities, professors aren't interested in authors. It's deconstruction. There is no Dostoyevsky, there's only the text that calls itself Dostoyevsky. I still care about authors."

The idea for the *Hidden Book in the Bible* first occurred to Friedman about 12 years ago.

A colleague told him that, based on similarities of style, language and interest, he thought that the author of the Court History of David, the story of King David and his family that is mostly found in Samuel II, also wrote the J portions of the Torah.



Statue of King David as a young warrior, brought from Florence to Jerusalem's Tower of David Museum. (Ariel Jerzolimski)

Instead of breaking the Bible into fragments, Friedman swims against the scholarly tide, viewing it as a literary whole

Friedman decided to look into it. "People had said this before," he says. "Some of the great 19th-century

Bible scholars were often on to things, and then they got lost. "Nobody had quite put it together right, and one of the reasons it got lost was that they didn't make the case so well, so nobody bought it. And it was just forgotten."

FRIEDMAN began a systematic study that he believes has turned up some fairly conclusive evidence.

"I started finding patterns of things that would only occur in very specific groups of texts," he says.

Word, phrases and theme in certain texts appear nowhere else in the Bible. For example, five words and two phrases relate to "deception" in the Bible, and all are in this group of texts.

'This is in a class with Homer, in a class with Dostoyevsky – as good as any 20th-century novelist. Better!'

References to a "coat of many colors," washing feet or shearing sheep, to "Sheol" as the abode of

the dead and to foolish people occur in these texts only.

The biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse, "to lie with," occurs 32 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and 30 of them are in the texts Friedman identified as authored by J.

He further found that when one story finishes, a new text with common wording, suggesting common authorship, picks up the account seamlessly. To Friedman, that suggested a continuous account.

He found numerous parallel stories in the J texts. Certain common themes are found here and nowhere else in biblical texts. For example, someone gets drunk and is the victim of deception.

Spies and espionage feature in nine stories spread out through six books. And nearly all the sex in the Hebrew scriptures is found in these texts.

"You see things that occur 32 times in the Bible and 30 of them are in this group of texts and two in the rest of the Bible put together. Or a dozen times in the Bible and all dozen are in these texts," Friedman says. "That means something is going on."

When Friedman put all the texts together, he found a work that had a developed plot and used literary devices like foreshadowing.

"This is the person who set the tone of how you write a book," he says. "What happens in the creation story is crucial to when God meets Abraham. And what happens with Jacob deceiving his brother Esau is going to play out in the family in the next couple of generations, with his sons playing the same tricks on him that he pulled on his father Isaac."

"And it's going to play out 10 generations later, when you get to King David, who is his descendant, who does the same thing."

"He does a deception and it plays out with all of his children, one of his sons killing another of his sons."

Friedman first presented his theory several years ago to the Biblical Colloquium, a distinguished scholarly society nearly 50 years old that was considering him for membership.

He received some criticism, which he says helped him refine his theory.

"Still, they voted me in," he says.

HE is not without critics. Most vocal has been John Van Setters, a professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with whom Friedman has been engaged in a sort of scholarly feud for several years.

They faced off in the pages of *Bible Review* magazine in August 1994, when Friedman wrote a critical review of Van Setters' book, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*, and Van Setters responded.

Van Setters returned the favor in the October issue of *Religious Studies News*, arguing that Friedman's theories were not original and don't hold up to scrutiny.

"David, his sons, and the monarchy in the Court History," Van Setters writes, "could not possibly be understood as the culmination of the divine promise to Abraham [contra Friedman]. All the sordid stories about David and his family are meant to discredit the institution of the monarchy and the Davidic dynasty, and nothing could be a stronger contrast to J's presentation of Abraham."

Friedman is undeterred. "If it's right, it matters. And it is," he says. "I keep saying 'if' because I'm trying to be fair and I know there will be people who will challenge it. But I'm convinced. And many of my colleagues are convinced. This is really something."

(The Baltimore Sun)

Today's forecast: Hot air

It's drought season, right on schedule – two months into rainy season.

Never mind that we've already had rain, even some flooding. In this country, we can walk around wet as a fish and still wonder when this drought is going to end. It's part of our cultural psychosis.

Blame the meteorologists. All summer long, they have nothing to do. "Hot today," they can announce, or "warm today." Come winter, they have to be noticed, so they play on our penchant for anxiety by steadily tossing out that dreaded word, "drought." It's the same every year, which makes it easy to predict the obvious.

I forecast: The Orthodox will be blamed for not doing something about it.

Sure, they'll incant the Prayer For Rain when it's going to rain anyway, instead of during a drought. Ultimately they will organize a special emergency prayer, and within an hour it will rain, and everyone but the Orthodox will mumble that it's just a coincidence.

Newspapers will mention the drought once a month at first, then, according to schedule, every couple of weeks, building up to daily reports of the disaster

raised: "A pipeline. What do those Turks need with all those freshwater lakes? All we need to do is make peace with Syria and – oh, forget it."

For a day or two the country will debate whether the ideas are feasible or lunatic (happens every year), and then it'll rain, and the minus level will rise to minus-minus, and the ideas will be forgotten.

Suddenly we'll have a tremendous downpour, the phone lines will mysteriously go dead, and Bezeq will say what do you expect, the cables got wet. It'll rain for three days straight. It'll have absolutely no effect on the Kinneret.

Thousands of people will get into their cars and head north for a first-hand look at the evaporating Kinneret. They'll say "isk-isk" and go back home, saying "they've got to do something about this" – they, meaning the politicians. The politicians will debate the crisis and unanimously agree that "they've got to do something about this" – they, meaning the public. Within 24 hours something else of national urgency will come up, and it'll all be forgotten.

It'll snow. The telephone lines will go dead, and the electricity too.

Not Page One



Sam Orbaum

No matter how much it rains in winter, the experts will say it's not enough – but if only people flushed less often, it would make a difference

ahead of us. When the disaster is upon us, there will be three or four stories a day (only two or three in an election year) about the level of the Kinneret.

No matter how much it rains throughout the winter, the experts will say it's not enough, but if only people flushed less often, it would make a difference. Not one Israeli will.

Meteorologists will explain, as they do every year, that the minimum level of the Kinneret is minus this, the maximum is minus that, the red level is minus such-and-such and a big plus would get us to a smaller minus, but too much and we'd be getting too close to sea level. No one will know what the hell they're talking about, because how can a sea be below sea level?

Farmers will be blamed. Especially the ones who grow grapefruits and sell them abroad, thus exporting our water, sort of like raising sabra children to go live in *hutz la'ret*. It will be suggested the farmers grow dried fruit instead of watermelons. The farmers will respond that everyone else should take a flying leap into their brimming swimming pools.

Bihi will be personally blamed for the crisis. Barak will snort that this is just another example of the Likud ruining the country, and the Palestinians will whine to the United Nations that their pregnant women and little children are dying of thirst because the Israeli water parks are overflowing with diverted Palestinian water.

Everyone will come up with a solution. "Icebergs. We should haul icebergs from the Arctic, which would solve our water problem and simultaneously save the human race by reducing the flooding effects of global warming on the ice cap."

Or the Turkey Option will be

Everybody will blame the guys who trim the trees. Truckloads of snow will be dumped in Tel Aviv. Thousands of Israelis will head north to ski on the Hermon, but the slopes will be closed because "there's too much snow." Nobody will understand what this means.

A week of stormy weather will make everyone wish for the drought again.

Danny Roup will go on TV and promise more of the same, and smile, and we'll hate him. Some people will actually blame him.

The torrents will cause widespread flooding – everywhere but at the Kinneret. The minus will increase (decrease?).

Meteorologists will explain the phenomenon as a "wet drought" and suggest people stop flushing altogether. (Not even the meteorologists will.) Some yokel will demand that tourists bring their own water supply.

There will be newspaper articles about desalination. No one will read them. A crackpot scientist will be interviewed about the worst-case scenario, under the headline "What If It Never Rains Again?" Everyone will read it, because this is a nation conditioned to consider worst-case scenarios.

Not that anyone will be worried. Even with the end of the world looming, we'll be assuring each other *yihye b'seder*. Somehow it'll all work out: either by the trickle-down effect, which happens every year when the snow on the Golan melts, a phenomenon which the meteorologists always forget to mention until we're crazed with panic, or by a miracle. We can always depend on both.

Drought season will end. Summer will begin. No matter how much rain there was, it won't be enough, but somehow, it will. Just like everyone knew it would be. (Happens every year.)

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Save me! I'm a victim of Viagra

Dear Ruthie, I suppose I should, by all criteria, be overjoyed at the arrival of Viagra on the marketplace. But I am not happy at all! My husband (now retired) and I were happily married for about 30 years until this monster of a drug invaded our lives.

Dear Ruthie



Ruthie Blum

nothing to do with sex. The tone of your letter suggests that you view your "Mister" with no small amount of contempt. Describing the man you love as someone who doesn't have anything "important" on his brain is a strong indication of this. So, too, is your pointing out that he offers no help around

the house. These may be the outward expressions of a deeper anger over your husband's being housebound altogether. In fact, for all you know, his newfound fixation on Internet pornography and his drug-assisted sexuality may have something to do with his own feelings of anger at being stuck at home.

However, instead of admitting to him (or even, perhaps, to yourself) that the shift in roles at this stage in your lives may be taking its toll, you blame Viagra and cyberspace for putting a damper on your 30-year marriage.

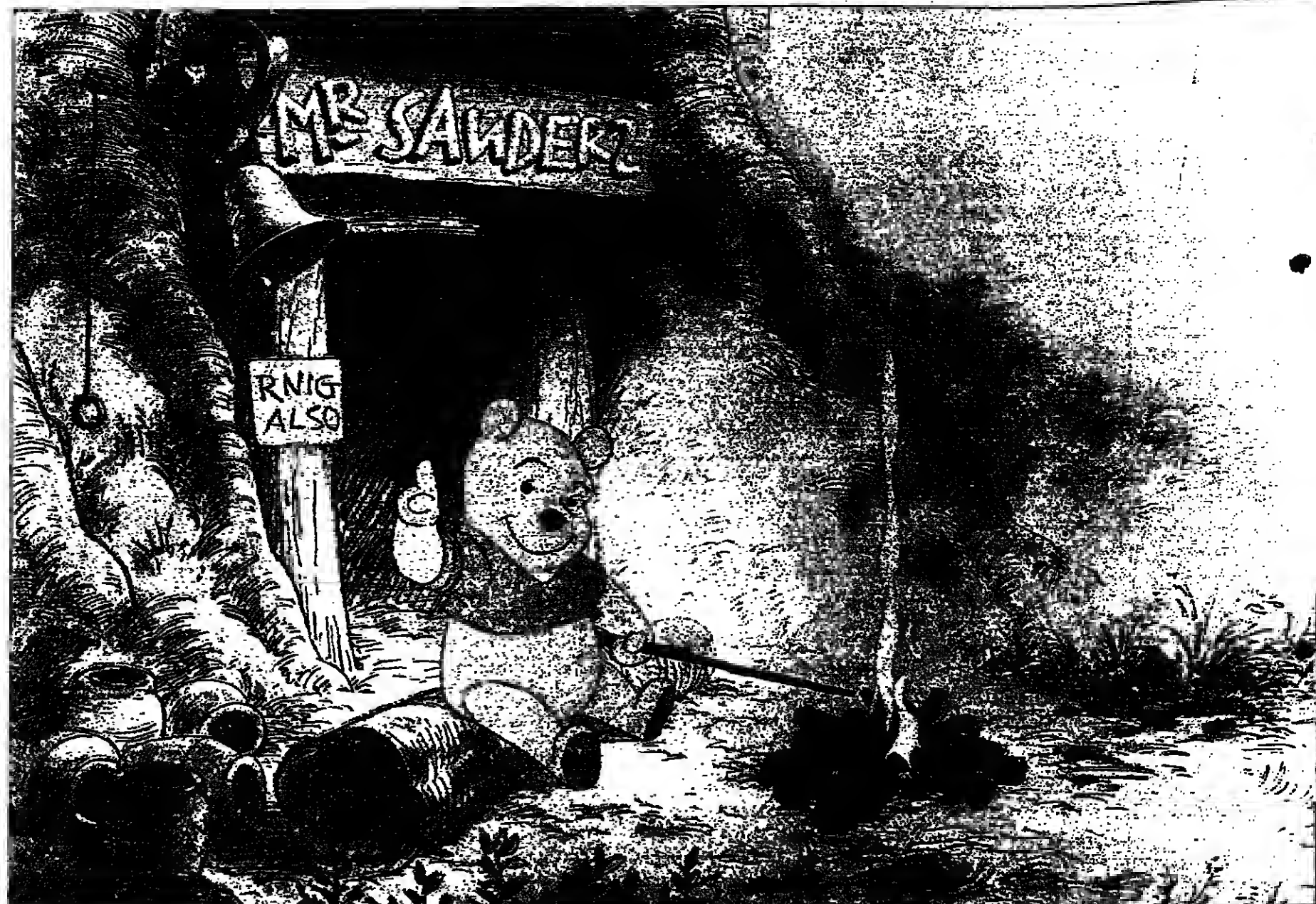
This is not to say that the "irritation" caused by your partner's daily pouncing is not genuine in and of itself — just that neither pharmaceuticals nor computers can be held responsible for the actions of the people who use them.

If you want things to change, you'll have to take the bull by the horns, so to speak, and conduct a different kind of session from the one that awaits you daily at the door.

Your husband can and should take responsibility for anything he does that affects the person with whom he shares bed and board.

There is no law that says he has to pop erection pills on a daily basis, any more than there is one that says you have to accommodate him every time he does.

Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, Jerusalem 91000. For e-mail: ruthie@jpost.co.il ('Dear Ruthie' also appears in *In Jerusalem and in City Lights on Fridays*.)



(Above) The vivid, Disney-drawn characterization and (below, right) the more sedate and traditional Classic Pooh.

Pooh power, and what lies behind it

How has a mild-mannered, very English bear managed to encroach on the toy store shelf space of industry pros like Big Bird and Mickey Mouse? Pooh is our alter ego, writes Mary McNamara



Walt Disney Productions

At the center of things is the bear, Edward Bear, a.k.a. Winnie-the-Pooh. A small bear of very little brain, with a sticky substance abuse problem and yet a certain charisma.

He gathered about him a clan of disparate creatures — a piglet, a donkey, a rabbit, two kangaroos, an owl. The purpose: adventure. They all ostensibly answered to the Man, the Big Guy in short pants, Christopher Robin, but it was the bear who called the shots. In his own run-tum-tiddle-um-tum way, he ran the Hundred Acre Wood.

But that wasn't enough. It's never enough. Eventually, he cut a deal. Eventually, he headed to the Coast. On Uncle Walt's dime. And now? Forget the mouse. The bear owns this town.

A trip through any toy store, any department store, tells the tale. Or at least the licensing/copyrighting tale. Where once there was nothing, or but a few plush toy Poohs, slightly orange with the red-monikered crop top, there are now racks of Pooh, walls of Pooh, rooms of Pooh. And Piglet, and Tigger and all the denizens of the wooded acres that grew within A.A. Milne's imagination.

There are dolls and toys and games, bedding and clothes and chairs, watches and earrings and backpacks, pillows and throw rugs and piggy banks, soap dispensers and toothbrush holders and personal hygiene products. Most of which come in two guises — Pooh, the vivid Disney-drawn characterization, and the more sedate and traditional Classic Pooh.

AND this season, there were, despite the nondenominational nature of the original characters, Santa Pooh gift bags, tags and paper. Christmas stockings. Christmas throws and more orna-

ments than you could fit on the Rockefeller Center tree. There was even a Hanukkah Party Pooh.

Surely Ramadan Pooh and Kwanzaa Pooh are not far behind. "Pooh belongs to everybody," says John Singh, spokesman for the Disney Consumer Products Division. "He can be anything you want him to be. It's totally appropriate for him to celebrate Thanksgiving or Hanukkah or the Fourth of July."

The numbers say no matter what Pooh does, he does it big. In October, Winnie-the-Pooh was the No. 2 licensed toy line, behind only Barbie.

Ed Roth at the NPD Group, a marketing research company to New York, says he expects Pooh will end up having been in the top five at year's end — the first year it would do so — with such heavy hitters as Hot Wheels and Lego.

"It'll probably end up with 2 percent or 2.2% of the market," Roth says. "That may sound small, but it translates to about \$400 million. And that's just the toys."

Where do Disney's standard characters rank? No. 16. The next new ride at Disneyland, scheduled to open next summer, will be the Many Adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh. There are whippersnappers among those who know that the bear, in fact, has replaced Mickey Mouse, that the mouse is down for the count.

HOW did a mild-mannered literary bear and his friends, plucked from the sylvan simplicity of the English countryside, manage to invade the shelf space of seasoned industry pros like Big Bird and Mickey?

"Pooh is a very lovable character," says Charles Riggio, executive director of the Licensing Industry Merchandising Association. "He's soft and cuddly, which parents are attracted to. And many

mothers today grew up with him, so you've got the nostalgia factor. And, of course, the property managers have done a terrific job."

The property managers are, of course, Disney. And their courtship of Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends was a persistent one, beginning sometime in the 1940s when, according to Robert Tieman, manager of the Walt Disney archives, Walt himself began sporadic negotiations with the A.A. Milne estate.

It was complicated: Dutton Publishing owned some rights, as did Milne's widow and his gentleman's club, so it wasn't until 1964 that Disney was able to acquire film and merchandising.

The first thing Disney did was redraw Ernest H. Shepard's pen-and-ink characters in a more child-friendly and colorful way. The second thing was to grant Sears, then Sears, Roebuck & Co., 30-year exclusive merchandising rights, making Winnie-the-Pooh the first Disney character for which the merchandise preceded the film.

Thirty years later, when the contract was up, things at Disney had changed. The company was doing its own merchandising and was looking for another 365-day product, something with the punch and durability of Mickey and friends.

Enter the bear. And all his little friends. The treehouses and honey pots. Which would look so good on mobiles and lunch boxes and cookie jars and blankets.

Disney did not renew the Pooh contract with Sears. Instead, it began planning the return of Winnie-the-Pooh, both Disney and Classic.

The former was aimed at mass market, preteen middle America; the latter, which had been licensed since the late '80s to a few high-end manufacturers, remained premium, more for adults than preschoolers.

The launch, intentionally, was not

tied to any movie or event. The Disney logo, though present, is downplayed on Pooh merchandise and is almost invisible on Classic Pooh.

Working with a wide variety of licensees — Mattel, Timex, Johnson & Johnson, and Wamsutter — Disney created products across all categories. All, says Singh, true to the original themes of Milne's work.

"All our licensees are well-versed in the characters," Singh says. "We make them well-versed," he adds, describing the Pooh style guide, which devotes several hundred pages to each character.

"It's the definitive source on history, appearance, coloring, personality, down to what they like to eat, drink, do for fun."

POOH purists might argue with this. There is an unflattering vivaciousness of the characters' depictions not present in the books — Tigger was irrepressible, certainly, but the others were not exactly vivacious.

They had more complex personalities that included swirls of timidity (Piglet), arrogance (Owl), seemingly chemical depression (Eeyore), xenophobia (Rabbit) and maternal oppression (Kanga).

And Disney's creation of very un-Milne story lines — for the TV show

The New Adventures of Pooh, which is currently in reruns and has, of course, accompanying videos and children's books — leave some confused or dismayed.

"My husband was looking at the kids' books," one mother of two says. "And he got pretty angry."

He said, "This never happened in the real books, this wouldn't have happened in the real books."

At Dutton Children's Books, which still owns the rights to the original Milne classics, there is no such animal as Classic Pooh. There is Pooh and "the Other Pooh."

Yet the naysayers cannot dispel the fact that since 1995, when Mattel came out with the first new Pooh plush toys, the success has been phenomenal.

Because at the center of the numbers and the strategy is the bear. Perpetually perplexed but game for just about anything, he is our alter ego.

Never too busy for a game of sticks or a morsel of honey, he and his friends can be counted on.

"They're cute and cuddly," says Lindsay Jordan, a 12-year-old Pooh aficionado. "And when you need a friend, Pooh's there to play with and to hug."

He is, after all, that sort of bear. (Los Angeles Times)

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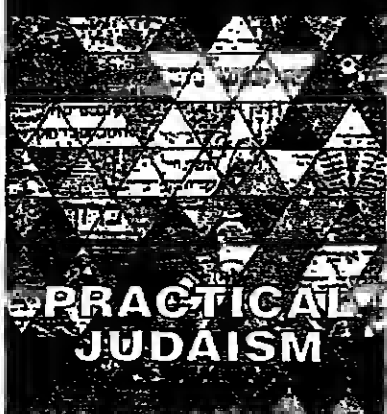
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סדרה מן האל

A brilliant mistake

In Tune



By David Brinn

PAINTED FROM MEMORY

Elvis Costello with Burt Bacharach (Helioco)

VH1 STORYTELLERS

Ringo Starr (Helioco)

SAHARA

Albina (NMC)

It sounds like a match made in heaven: two of the finest songwriters of their respective eras joining forces for a composing tour de force. However, something was lost in the translation from sheet music to studio recording. While the songs are often stunning, ultimately Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach's much-touted collaboration *Painted From Memory* is, as Costello once sang, "a brilliant mistake."

But despite the seeming incongruity of the pairing of the angry "king of punk" and the classy "king of pop," there is quite a bit of logic lurking back there.

Costello, one of the most articulate and diverse rockers to emerge out of the late 1970s punk boom, relied directly on classic pop structures and Tin Pan Alley references. He regularly covered

songs by Bacharach and his long-time lyricist Hal David without any trace of irony, even back in punk's 1977 heyday.

And Bacharach's oeuvre of light-as-a-feather, 1960s pop songs remains timeless, renewing itself for each generation in soundtracks, cover versions and revivals. The possibilities of pairing the two seemed limitless.

But *Painted From Memory*'s lustily arranged pop suffers from both parties submerging their personalities in order to produce a true collaboration. Whereas Lennon's aggressiveness and McCartney's sweetness clashed to create magic for the Beatles, here Costello defers his caustic wit and punchy, spunk to Bacharach's heavy orchestration and dramatic overkill.

While Bacharach gets Costello to reach high-vocal ranges he's never attempted before, the emotional edges they expose are quickly covered up in Muzak-like strings and convoluted melodies. And since when does Bacharach only write ballads? "I'll Say a Little Prayer for You" and "Do You Know the Way to San Jose" grooved to a swinging '60s beat. Yet here the duo fears picking up the tempo, lest they be accused of belittling the craft of serious songwriting.

No doubt, Bacharach and Costello invested a lot of heart and love into this project. But in attempting to create a noble body of work, they forgot to write any songs that you'll want to hum along to on the radio. And that's what it's all about, isn't it?

THE VH1 *Storytellers* series keeps up its winning streak with Ringo Starr hosting a relaxed session of his solo hits and contributions to the Beatles. With a stellar band boasting Eagles gun-



The Punk meets The Godfather - Elvis Costello (right) and Burt Bacharach try too hard on 'Painted from Memory.'

slinger Joe Walsh, ex-Bad Company drummer Simon Kirk, and current collaborator/partner Mark Hudson, Starr finally feels comfortable with his place in rock history as he leads the band through rousing renditions of 11 songs, including "With a Little Help From My Friends," "It Don't Come Easy" and "Photograph."

The between-song patter on the muse behind the songwriting - the modus operandi for the *Storytellers* series - is frequently hilarious. Ringo, with Beatles/Liverpudlian aplomb, provides typically self-deprecating comments before kicking back and letting the music speak for itself.

The tracks from his most recent disc, *Walking Man*, don't stand up in comparison to the oldies, but there aren't many artists who have been around for 35 years that you can't say that about. Ringo simply takes his own advice and "acts naturally."

ALABINA's *Sahara*, featuring the Israeli vocalist Ishtar, sounds initially like the Gipsy Kings of

the Middle East with its hit breakneck rendition of the oldie "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood (Lolole)." But the multi-ethnic band quickly settles into a journeyman mix of Oriental tunes that possess both a Middle Eastern and South American influence.

Sound schizophrenic? Doesn't matter. The band is said to be

hugely popular here, with its debut disc selling over 10,000 copies. *Sahara* is likely to follow suit, especially with Ishtar's willowy take on a Hebrew rendition of "Ya Alama." Hebrew lyrics provided by Ehud Manor. Albina tackles so many styles that the only thing missing on *Sahara* is a rap version of "Ya Mama."

'Eating' causes indigestion

Theater Review



By Naomi Doudai

Ochlim ('Eating') by Yacov Shabat, Gesher Theater, Old Jaffa, January 6

With *Eating* Yevgeny Artych once again devises a production that is a symphony of sumptuous lighting (Bambit), exotic costumes (Valentina Komolova), striking music (Avi Binyamin), elegant movement (Marina Belov) and daring decor (Alexander Lissiansky).

In fact it is the latter, with its surreal cloning of three enormous stuffed sheep (Dolly x 3), that fills the stage and steals the show.

But why sheep, when in Naboth's life (1 Kings 21) - a biblical story pregnant with the deep and moving drama on which Shabat based his play - a vineyard is the catalyst?

This and many other questions go unanswered in this feeble dramatization of the original. Where the Bible story is terse, treated with economy, Shabat's version is so drawn out, that before long it begins to bore.

If, in presenting the issues prevalent in Ahab's corrupt and



Yevgeny Dodina makes 'a mythic monster' Jezabel.

crumbling kingdom, it does satirize as well as symbolize the spiritual-secular conflict and the corruption that beleaguers us today, it does so in an offhand, at times facetious manner.

It never quite decides whether it is satire, cynical cabaret, or neo-biblical pageant. In a limited way it works as spectacular entertainment, but that hardly cancels out the glaring artistic and thematic incongruities.

The delivery of a Hebrew text in alien accents, combined with the disparity in acting styles between local and immigrant artists, is among the chief of these.

There are powerful presentations by consummate actors like Yevgeny Dodina, a mythic monster of a bejeweled and beclawed Jezabel; Leonid Kanyevsky, a wry, poker-faced Elyakim (here for some reason, rather than Elijah); and Yevgeny Gamburg, a superbly simple but subtle Naboth. But they never gel and even collide with the Ahab played by Amnon Wolf as a street-wise sabra simpleton.

Incongruous, too, are some of the props. Surely Rennie Mackintosh must be turning in his grave to see Art Nouveau-inspired chairs figure as part of a biblical background.

Concert Roundup Dmitry Sitkovetsky as violin soloist led the Sinfonietta with quality and taste. The *Four Seasons* - four short violin concerti depicting spring, summer, autumn, and winter - was presented with refined interplay of solo instruments and the full orchestra, colored with subtle dynamic shading.

His virtuosity is that of the chamber-music player - exacting and musically, but with a hard sheen in the tone. He led with authority.

The Sinfonietta strings never sounded better, playing with the finesse of a European chamber orchestra.

The improved sonority was partly due to a reshuffling of the

Sinfonietta Beersheba
Dmitry Sitkovetsky, conductor/violin
Vivaldi: 'The Four Seasons'
Mendelssohn:
Symphony No. 3 'Scottish'
Beersheba Conservatory,
January 9

orchestra in 19th-century fashion - violins on the outside, cello and viola inside.

But in the early Romantic symphony by Mendelssohn his conducting proved stiff, unyielding in tempo and rhythm, rather coldly projecting the artistic image of a 'Scottish' symphony.

It was the engineer's logic rather than the poet's fantasy that governed this rendition. Max Stern.

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra
Julian Rachlin, violin
Max Stern: 'Arise, Shine!'
Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D
Ysaye: Sonata Ballade No. 3
Tel Aviv, Mann Auditorium,
January 3

Is *Arise, Shine!* by Max Stern, world premiered by the IPO, "a prophecy which comes from nowhere and ends in nowhere," as the composer himself explains?

Possibly, but Stern's religiousness seems to be of a very light-hearted and New World sort, and not of the zealous local character.

His beautiful opus, in which he merges European and Middle Eastern traditions, is somewhat reminiscent of a sound track to a pirate movie (the happy end is guaranteed), rather than of an ordeal and a fervent soul's quest for light.

The Concerto in D minor for violin and orchestra, by Jean Sibelius, performed by Julian Rachlin, left a mixed impression.

Kaprizma premieres three Israeli works

Granted, the young musician has an almost incredible command of his instrument, but one wonders what his sweet romanticism (with occasional Gypsy tinges in the first and the third parts of the concerto) has to do with the freezing romanticism of the Finnish composer.

Heavy and uneven orchestral accompaniment under the IPO's associate conductor Arthur Post left a lot to be desired, especially in the Adagio.

It was during the Sonata Ballade No. 3, by Eugene Ysaye, which Rachlin performed as an encore, that he emerged as emotional, deep and virtuosic violinist. It better confirmed his reputation as a rising star - obviously, the Belgian composer's style is more his taste.

Maxim Reider

Liturgical
Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra
Tilzer Kuzenchor
Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden, conductor
Brigman Young University Jerusalem
Center and Jerusalem Theater
January 4-6

Bach's six Motets were presented by the Tolz Boys' Choir, conducted by Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden, in its a cappella program of the Liturgical series. Vastly different from each other in form, structure, textures and expression, these motets provide enough variety for an evening's program, despite their similarity of genre.

The choir's clear, pure voices, superb training and meticulous accuracy is a delight - though not unalloyed. Like vintage wines, the members of boys' choir change from year to year. Apparently this year is not one of Tolz's best years. The sopranos' highest notes were sometimes flat or went shrill at others. A sense of fatigue and indifference prevailed. The most dramatic motet, *Jesus, My Joy* was lacking in tension. Some passages sounded mechanical rather than inspired or emotional.

The most movingly performed motet was *Come, Jesus, Come*, which conveyed a sense of supplication. It was an indication of the choir's potential.

The choir's need to live up to the high standards it had established in the past, seemed to be its main difficulty.

Matters improved considerably in the choir's program of Haydn masses (*Creation* and *Heiligmesse*) with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. In these, the choir could blend in with the orchestra, creating a delightful, full, well-rounded sound, with refreshing exuberance and effectively controlled contrasts and nuances of dynamics.

Yet the sopranos' high notes were still occasionally harsh and constrained, and their pitches tended to be tentative. One might have expected less orchestral volume from a choir conductor to enable

the choir to sound more audible. The soloists' continual movement from within the choir to the front of the stage created too much traffic. No harm would have been done if these passages had been delivered from the soloists' positions within the choir.

The intricate fugue of the *Heiligmesse's* "Kyrie" was an impressive artistic achievement. Its imploring final "Dona nobis pacem" sounded as if peace could not fail to come at once.

Ury Eppstein

Intercontemporain Ensemble
Kaprizma Ensemble
20th-century works
Jerusalem Music Center,
Mishkenot Sha'ananim
December 31

Members of the Paris-based Intercontemporain Ensemble joined the local Kaprizma Ensemble for a workshop and concert of contemporary music.

World premieres of three Israeli works were the center of attraction. Abel Ehrlich's 66th *Sonnet* concentrated largely on exploration of sound colors in a rather sophisticated manner. The wide differences between the winds (oboe and

clarinet) and the strings (viola and cello) were more apparent than the unifying factors.

Michael Wolpe's *Kaprizma No. 9* for three wind instruments, three string instruments and guitar, conducted by Pierre Strauch, signified a return to melody. The preceding pieces by Denisov and Nemakli were still dominated by melody-negating conventions of a one-time avant-garde that has, in retrospect, become *arric-racade*. The piece's communicativeness is enhanced by an interplay of attractive instrumental colors.

An even greater variety of tone colors - six wind instruments, two string instruments and piano - is compressed into Israel Shavit's considerably shorter *Instrumental Cantata*, conducted by Alain Damiani.

Considering its form, it could just as well have been entitled "suite" - a caption perhaps too conventional for comfort. The very idea that the instruments are "singing" the aria, the chorus, and the movements is more original than its actual realization.

The concise treatment of musical ideas, the movements' contrasts and the wealth of instrumental colors attract attention throughout.

Ury Eppstein

Bat Dor's mistakes

DANCE REVIEW

By ORA SHAFRAN

A dance company's 30th anniversary should and could have been a festive occasion. Instead, it merely

Bat-Dor Dance Company
30th Anniversary
TAPAC
January 7

exposed Bat-Dor's weaknesses - the poor artistic choices that were made along the way which failed to best use the company's strengths - namely its dancers.

The evening started with a member of the Friends of Bat-Dor Committee reciting, at length, a

glorified version of the company's history. This was followed by a tiresome and poorly edited 30-minute video. The clip comprised excerpts from early repertoire works that mainly showcased artistic manager and former leading dancer Jeannette Ordman in her glory.

The personality-cult trip was pathetic rather than impressive, and drew embarrassed giggles from the audience.

The artistic calling card also included two questionable choices - a total flop called *The Party* by Ania Brud, and a conservative new work by the celebrated American choreographer, Lar Lubovitch, based on Yiddish songs.

Brud's *Party* (original music: Israel Bright) was crowded with a collection of characters acting in an archetypal manner. The attempt to present a microcosm

of the human experience resulted in arbitrary stylistic choices which relied on the dancers' personal intimacy with recreational disco dance. They seemed to be moving aimlessly, disregarding the music.

Lubovitch is obviously a great craftsman of fluid movement, and although his choreographic language is conservative, it is also rich and gratifying. Each song in the work included well-thought-out movement phrases set around a theme, and the choreography displayed the company's delightful dancers at their best. Nonetheless, this particular work, dressed in a Broadway musical's idea of the *shpiel*, is not one of the choreographer's best.

It is a shame that to mark such a momentous occasion Bat Dor chose a work so removed from what is happening at the forefront of contemporary dance.

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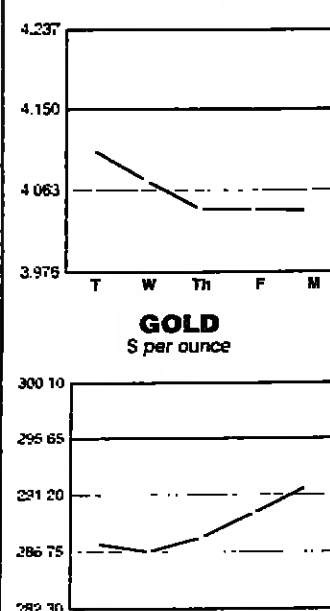
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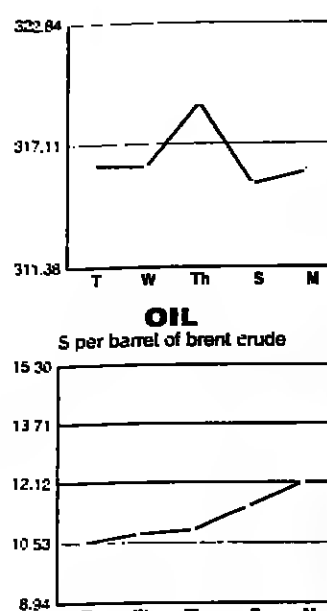
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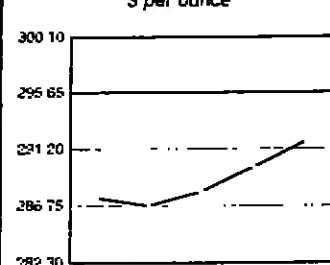
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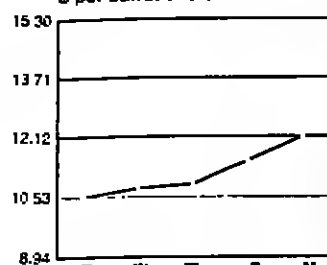
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Israelis spent NIS 453b. on cigarettes in '97

Israelis bought 453 million cartons of cigarettes in 1997, spending approximately NIS 10 a pack, or NIS 4.53 billion on their smoking habit, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce said yesterday. Cigarette imports have grown by 3 percent annually since 1987, while local cigarette manufacturing decreased to 240,000 cartons in 1997 from 370,000 in 1996. Figures for 1997 showed sales were split evenly between imports and exports.

Jessica Steinberg

Employment Service wants NIS 15m. for jobs

Employment Service director-general Moshe Dimri said yesterday he needs NIS 15 million to create additional employment services, such as a job database, career counseling, and job training. That's about 10 percent of the service's entire NIS 150 million budget, said spokesman Meir Har-Even. "We've never had a technical development budget and it's an important dimension," he said. "We want to shorten the time span between a person's unemployment and employment. Our request is modest."

Unemployment hit 8.7% last year, or 198,000 people, up from 1997's 7.7%, or 172,000, according to recent Central Bureau of Statistics figures.

Jessica Steinberg

ICQ membership reaches 25 million

Subscribers to the popular ICQ on-line messaging and chat service developed by Mirabilis have more than doubled in the last six months, America Online (AOL) recently announced. AOL bought Mirabilis - a Tel-Aviv start-up - in June for \$287 million when the company had a membership of some 12 million for its free chat line.

Nicky Blackburn

Report: PM may back housing reform

Budgetary arrangements vote postponed to next week

By JESSICA STEINBERG

Yesterday's Knesset Finance Committee vote on the Public Housing Law reform, part of the budgetary arrangements bill, was postponed because the committee wants the government's involvement, said Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism).

"We need the government's say on this section," Ravitz told *The Jerusalem Post*.

According to Israel Radio, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is considering supporting the controversial housing law after attempting to freeze it in the budgetary arrangements bill.

The law, proposed by MK Ran Cohen (Meretz), entitles 100,000 tenants in public

housing to purchase their apartments at heavily subsidized prices. In some cases, the discount could be as large as 85 percent of the property's value.

Cohen's public housing reform will cost the government around NIS 10 billion over the next few years, cash for which there is no budget, according to the Treasury.

The Meretz MK was not available for comment.

Ravitz also postponed Wednesday's vote on the budgetary arrangements bill to Sunday because of a scheduling conflict with a Labor Party committee meeting on the same day.

Meanwhile, as January passes without a 1999 budget, Finance Committee members continued quarreling over which MKs are playing election economics.

Michael Kleiner (Gesher), committee coalition whip, said yesterday he had asked Prime Minister's Office Director-General Moshe Leon and Treasury budget director David Milgrom to meet with him today for a definitive meeting on the arrangements bill. According to Kleiner's estimates, the Treasury wants to get rid of a "couple of billion shekels" in budgetary changes.

"I want to know how much each paragraph in the law is worth to them," he said, comparing random changes in the budget law to going food shopping without checking the prices.

For now, said Kleiner, the choice is between creating a deficit for the purpose of Netanyahu's election economics or making proportional cuts from all government offices.

Otherwise, "we're playing with the deficit." He also accused MK Avraham Shohat (Labor) of allowing Netanyahu to play election economics.

"Bibi [Netanyahu] is doing what Baiga [Shohat] carried out in 1996," he said, "and we'll have another two years of suffering because of Baiga's economics."

In response, former finance minister Shohat pointed at the higher unemployment, decreased investment, and lower exports of the last three years. It's the coalition's "fascist policies" that are causing the problems," he said.

Shohat added that Labor has not relinquished responsibility on the budget or the accompanying bill. "We've said we will support it."

Barkan invests \$7.5m. in new winery

By NICKY BLACKBURN

Israel's second largest wine producer, Barkan Winery, plans to almost double its capacity of wines with a new \$7.5 million winery to be built between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The winery, located on the Barkan industrial estate, has purchased 7.5 acres of land at Kibbutz Hulda at a cost of \$1.5 million. It plans to begin building there at the start of 2000, and the first wines should be available by the following August. The cost of building will be in the region of \$6 million.

"Over the past five years our sales have increased by 20 percent annually," Shmuel Boxer, Barkan's general manager, said yesterday. "We have planted a lot of new vineyards and have reached the point where the capacity at our existing winery is almost finished." The new winery, which will include a visitors center, and the company's marketing and distribution center, is located in the middle of a large 250 acre vineyard planted jointly by Barkan and the kibbutz.

At present Barkan, which saw sales of NIS 65 million in 1998, produces about 5,000 tons of grapes a year. The new facility will increase this capacity by a further 3,000 tons.

Boxer said he hopes the new winery and visitors center will help Barkan double its sales figures.

Most of the wines to be produced at the Hulda winery will be red, in line with maturing tastes in Israel.

At present Barkan sells 95 percent of its wines to the local market but Boxer hopes that the increased capacity will enable the company to enlarge its export market.

Ex-state budget head: Too late for election economics

By DAN GERSTENFELD

An attempt by the government to adopt election economics will fail, according to a report published yesterday by former state budget director Yoram Gabbai.

Gabbai said the strict monetary policy of the Bank of Israel and the activity of the Finance Ministry, which will try to meet the deficit target, will prevent the government from taking irresponsible economic steps which are aimed at improving the economic situation in the near term.

Gabbai, who heads Pe'ilim Portfolio Management, a member of the Bank Hapoalim Group, said that the only impact of the elections would be on "slightly more generous wage agreements" and the use of the budget reserves. He notes, however, that this will have only a minor impact on the economy's situation in 1999.

The business sector is expected to continue taking efficiency mea-

sures against the backdrop of slowing economic activity and the globalization process will continue, as local industry faces more competition.

Gabbai said that the Bank of Israel is expected to continue with its strict monetary policy in the next three or four years, as it aims to achieve price stability with an annual inflation of only 1.5 percent to 2%.

He claims that the fiscal policy will also remain tight, with the government continuing to cut the budget over the next three years. Gabbai also said that in the current political situation, the next government will introduce a budget which includes a high component of transfer payments instead of investing in infrastructure, research and development, and education.

Gabbai concluded that the state budget for 2000 is the key factor affecting the economic situation in coming years.

Offer brothers to bid for Zim

By DAN GERSTENFELD

The Ofer Brothers Investment Group will bid to acquire the holdings of the Israel Corporation in Zim Israel Navigation Company if the shipping company is offered for sale, a company spokesman said yesterday.

The Ofer brothers have expressed in the past interest in acquiring control of the shipping company, which is jointly controlled by the Israel Corp. and the government.

A spokesman for the company yesterday said the group had not yet been approached by the Israel Corp., but if such a request is submitted the company will view it favorably.

It is widely believed that if the Eisenberg Group succeeds in selling its 53.26 percent

stake in Israel Corp to Canada's Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Zim would be offered for sale.

The Eisenberg Group confirmed on Sunday that it is holding negotiations with the Canadian company, the world's largest potash manufacturer, on the sale of the Israel Corp. The Canadian company is only interested in the holdings of the Israel Corp. in Israel Chemicals, the country's largest chemical manufacturer, and is therefore expected to divest its other holdings, including its 49% holdings in Zim, 26% in Oil Refineries, and 16% in Tower Semiconductors.

Meanwhile, former finance minister Avraham Shohat yesterday said that the government might block the deal between Eisenberg and Potash. Shohat, who as finance

minister was in charge of selling the government's holdings in Israel Chemicals to the Israel Corp., said that the golden share which is held by the government allows it to disapprove such a deal.

The Israel Corp., is Israel's third largest holding company, after Koor Industries, and Clal Israel.

The Ofer brothers, Sammy and Yuli, are considered as one of the most prominent Israeli business families. Among others, they control United Mizrahi Bank.

The group is also very active in investments in Eastern Europe and announced last week the purchasing of a building in the center of Budapest which will be transformed into a luxurious hotel at an investment of some \$60 million.

New fund to help immigrant scientists

By NICKY BLACKBURN

A new non-governmental fund, set up by the voluntary association

Technological Entrepreneurship for Aliya, to help immigrant scientists commercialize their ideas is to be launched tomorrow.

"We want to be able to give scientists seed money to enable them to take the first step towards com-

mercializing an idea," said Prof. Yuval Ne'eman, a former minister of science and the honorary president of the organization.

The fund, which was set up by scientists, volunteers, and MK Yuli Stern (Yisrael Ba'aliya), has already raised \$1 million, but hopes to raise a further \$4 million over the next year.

"This is the third stage in the absorption of immigrant scientists," said Ne'eman, who has been actively encouraging scientists since the 1970s, when he helped initiate the Center for Absorption of Immigrants - the first stage.

The second stage came in 1990 when the Ministry of Industry and Trade set up a highly successful incubator program which gives new immigrants a grant to develop their ideas.

"The incubators are very important to help scientists develop and research an idea, but they don't have the means to help them commercialize their ideas by creating a small factory of their own, or starting something up on a small scale. This step is missing," said Ne'eman.

"We want to help immigrant scientists become entrepreneurs. At the moment, those that are lucky enough to find an investor when they leave the incubator can launch their ideas. If they don't, however, they just sit and wait, they don't have the knowledge or the means to take the next step."

The fund is to be launched at an event at Tel Aviv University. It will be attended by Science Minister Silvan Shalom and Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai.

Provident fund savings reach NIS 1.34b. in Dec.

By JESSICA STEINBERG

Overall net savings in provident funds rose to NIS 1.34 billion in December, compared to NIS 56 million in November and NIS 95m. in October, according to yesterday's Treasury figures.

Provident fund savings totaled NIS 661m. in December, up from NIS 148m. in November and NIS 251m. in October. Workplace training funds totaled NIS 674m. in December, an increase from NIS 204m. in November and NIS 156m. in October.

"December is always the strong month for provident funds," said Roni Eilan, a provident fund analyst at Potam Capital Markets.

Overall savings plans showed an accumulation to NIS 1.27b. in

December from NIS 1b. in November and NIS 579m. in October.

The jump in accumulated savings from November to December was due to bank customers' yearly rush to transfer annual tax exemptions from checking accounts to long-term savings plans, taking advantage of bank gifts and special offers, explained Mirit Biton, Bank Hapoalim's spokeswoman.

In December, shekel-linked accounts showed NIS 1.28b. in accumulated savings compared with NIS 989 million in November and NIS 555m. in October. Foreign exchange accounts listed accumulated savings of NIS 11m. in December from NIS 16m. in November and NIS 24m. in October.

Lucent Technologies to buy Kenan Systems for \$1.5b.

Lucent Technologies Inc., the world's largest phone-equipment maker, yesterday agreed to buy closely held telephone-billing software maker Kenan Systems Corp. for about \$1.48 billion in stock.

Murray Hill, New Jersey-based Lucent will issue about 12.88 million shares for Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Kenan Systems.

The announcement follows a report yesterday in the *Financial Times* that Lucent is in talks to buy networking-equipment maker Ascend Communications Inc. for more than \$16 billion. The report cited unidentified sources.

Kenan Systems makes software for billing, order processing and customer analysis, allowing phone companies to produce a single bill for any combination of wireless, wireline, voice, data, Internet and cable-television services. As phone companies team up in a series of mergers and acquisitions to offer a full range of services, they're demanding more from equipment makers such as Lucent to help integrate those new services for customers.

"Billing software is one of the hottest areas in telecom equipment, and Kenan has been dominating that area," said Gregory Geiling, an analyst at J.P. Morgan

Securities Inc., who rates Lucent shares a "buy."

Lucent expects to complete the acquisition, which will add to earnings starting this fiscal year, in the second quarter ending March 31.

The communications software market is expected to grow 25 percent a year to \$26 billion by 2000, Lucent said.

"We weren't a big player in this space, so we decided to jump to the head of the pack by acquiring the hottest player in the business," said Dan Stanzione, Lucent's chief operating officer.

Lucent already sells Kenan products to its customers and expects to be able to integrate the software in its equipment soon after the acquisition is completed.

The acquisition also will help Lucent boost its growth outside the US. Kenan Systems customers include British Telecommunications Plc and France Telecom, as well as AT&T Corp. and GTE Corp.

Kenan "has had a lot of success in the emerging carrier market and even in Europe, where Lucent traditionally has been weak," said Michael Cristinziano, an analyst at Gerard Kleiner Matison.

Kenan Systems will become a unit of Lucent and will keep its headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Bloomberg)

PERES

Continued from Page 1

"We have to negotiate to reach an agreement, and we won't return to the ugly business of war and terror," Peres said.

His former Oslo colleague, Ahmed Qurei, now Speaker of the legislative council, used almost identical words, saying: "We declare before you our commitment to peace as a strategy for which there is no substitute and no return. This [is] a peace that is just [and] lasting, and puts an end to the occupation.... [It] guarantees self-determination, an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, and security for both Palestinians and Israelis."

Qurei warned that expansion of settlements, holding Palestinian

prisoners, and maintaining what he termed an "illegal siege" of Jerusalem by curbing Palestinian access, are harming peace prospects.

"No doubt these negotiations cannot reach the peace we are hoping for as long as the parties do not believe in the importance of peace and as long as there are no real commitments to the agreements," he said.

Peres told the gathering later he did not agree with some of Qurei's remarks.

The government counters that the PA is responsible for the breakdown of the Wye agreement by stating repeatedly it will declare a state, and charges it with misrepresenting the prisoner issue, and not collecting illegal arms or curbing incitement.

The packed hall and repeated words of tribute to Peres showed the international esteem he still commands, an asset that will no doubt stand him in good stead if he gains another chance to be foreign minister.

Gorbachev urged both Israelis and Palestinians to adhere to the peace process.

"The one who persists will achieve. The losers are those who stop on the way and don't try to go on," he said.

Salah Tamari, a legislator from

Bethlehem, said that "every prominent figure in the world becomes sympathetic with the Palestinians after they leave office. When they are in office, they are hesitant, depending on the reactions of lobbying groups, whether in Israel or the US. When Peres was in office, he could have sped up implementation [of Oslo] but he didn't. Instead he bombed Kafr Kana [Lebanon]."

US Congressman Tom Lantos, a California Democrat, used his speech to urge Palestinians to refrain from declaring independence on May 4.

"My plea to my Palestinian friends is just a simple plea," he said. "Don't do anything on May 4, because then all hell will break loose and all your gains will go down the drain."

Hossam Khader, a legislator from Balata refugee camp near Nablus, commented later: "The Americans want us to be in line, and to keep the peace, but without giving us our rights."

MK Ze'ev (Benny) Begin reacted swiftly to Peres's speech. He said Peres's support for a Palestinian state revealed what his intentions were when signing the Oslo Accords.

Danna Harnan contributed to this report.

Drive
Carefully

Don't Waste Even...
A Single Drop!

سكيا من الأصل

Building Blocks

By JESSICA STEINBERG

Internet site www.jerusalem.gov.il provides information about real estate in the country, from photos of available apartments to a question-and-answer screen. Just "Ask the Expert."

There are also lists of real estate firms, renovation companies and information about how to sign up for a mortgage.

Ashkelon (Residential)
Construction company Sela Bina is selling new apartments in the "Yovel Towers" project. Located in the heart of the city, the towers contain 67 apartment units and are due to be completed within a year and a half.

The price of the apartments range from \$145,000 for a four and a half room, 108-sq.m. apartment with a porch, to \$109,900 for a three-room, 87-sq.m. apartment. New buyers will receive NIS 40,000 worth of vouchers for purchases at furniture chain Betli.

Caesarea (Residential)
On Rehov Tzipor, near the golf course, a two-family, 300-sq.m. villa situated on half a dunam was sold for \$460,000. The six-bedroom plus saloon, with two bathrooms, also includes a jacuzzi in the master bedroom, a full cellar, marble flooring and a rooftop driveway.

Property developers Ref-Mat Caesarea recently sold two apartments in the "Golf Park" residence project. Located within walking distance of the ocean and the country club, the residences are in a private neighborhood of two-story homes.

Each home offers three bedrooms with an option for a fourth and a porch, as well as central air conditioning, a jacuzzi, and electric shutters. One of the apartments was recently sold for \$164,000.

Haifa (Residential)
On Rehov Rachel, a two-room, 60-sq.m. apartment with a view was sold for \$125,000. The apartment needs renovations.

A four-room, 100-sq.m. apartment was sold on Rehov Ezer for \$225,000. The apartment with a view also includes a storeroom and private parking.

On Rehov Ezer, a four-room, 110-sq.m. apartment with a 25-sq.m. roof porch was sold for \$229,000. The apartment includes central heating, a storeroom, parking, and a view of the city.

Har Homa (Residential)
The Israel Land Administration is allowing seven companies to compete for tenders on 679 apartment units for a total of 1,025 apartments in Har Homa.

Given the demand for the first tender, there's no doubt that the same momentum will continue for the second set of tenders, according to Land Administration director Avi Dvorkin.

BAT to acquire Rothmans for £4.6b.

By LAURA BOARD

LONDON (Bloomberg) — British American Tobacco Plc, the world's second-largest tobacco company, agreed to buy Rothmans International SA from Switzerland's Compagnie Financiere Richemont AG and South Africa's Rembrandt Group Ltd. in a £4.6 billion stock swap.

Richemont and Rembrandt will own a 35 percent stake in the enlarged company, which combines the world's fourth-largest cigarette company with the maker of Lucky Strike.

The company will be worth £13b. and have 16% of the world cigarette market, BAT said.

The move bolsters BAT's presence in the profitable luxury-cigar business and increases its presence in Western Europe as it vies to challenge Philip Morris Cos. dominance in the global cigarette market.

BAT shares rose as much as 68.5 pence, or 13%, to 609.5p after the announcement.

"BAT has long wanted to add premium brands and is paying what appears to be a fair price for Rothmans," said Trevor Moss, an analyst at Robert Fleming Securities.

"It's very complementary for both groups."

Shares in Richemont surged 5.2% to 240, while Rembrandt shares rose 2.4% to 240.

Both BAT, which shed its financial-services activities last year, and Rothmans had also been named as a potential buyer for the international tobacco business of RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp.

Richemont currently owns two-thirds of Rothmans, while Rembrandt has one-third. The combined Richemont-Rembrandt interest in BAT would have the same proportion, the UK company said.

Rothmans' Chief Executive Bill Ryan will join BAT as joint managing director.

BAT expects to see £250 million a year of merger savings by the third year from the fusion.

It also said the move should boost underlying earnings next year.

Chairman Martin Broughton said the union of the companies is "a major step forward" in its bid to become the world's No. 1 cigarette maker.

BAT also said business has been satisfactory since it reported nine-month earnings in October. Conditions in Asia remain "very difficult," it said, though it's seen an improvement in Eastern Europe and Russia.

It will take a £60m. charge to cover plant closures in 1998, much of which will fall in the final quarter, it said.

It added that its charge to settle US tobacco litigation could be as much as \$750m.

Excluding the US charge but including the £60m. charge for plant closures, 1998 operating profit at constant exchange rates will be slightly ahead of 1997, it said.

The company will pay current shareholders a final dividend of 16.0 pence, and a special interim dividend of 4.0 pence, on July 1.

Rothmans will pay a further dividend to Richemont and Rembrandt amounting to £150m. in the year to March 31.

Both companies said the fusion will be earnings enhancing after the first year.

Top mutual funds for the long haul

WASHINGTON — As a guy who ridicules the proliferation of "Ten Best" lists, I risk being called a hypocrite for proffering my own every January.

But there's a difference. This is a list, not of the best mutual funds for the year ahead, but of some very good funds that should shine over the long term, meaning five years at least.

The first time I tried this exercise, at the start of 1997, the 10 funds returned 21.1 percent, beating the Dow by four points but trailing the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index, a broader measure of the market, by six.

Last year, I recited the previous 10 and added five new ones.

Overall, the funds were up an average of 14.8%. That's about the same as the average stock fund, at 14.5%, but far below the S&P, at 24.7%.

It's not hard to identify the main problem: My funds, especially the new ones, were heavily invested in value stocks — shares whose low price-to-earnings ratios and high dividends indicated they were bargains, shunned by the market but perhaps ready to bloom. As it turned out, value stocks had one of their worst years in history, compared with their opposite, growth stocks.

For example, Vanguard's value-stock index fund returned just 14.6% in 1998, while its growth-stock counterpart returned 42.2%.

There's a lesson here: Diversification counts. Putting nearly all your eggs in the bargain basket can be risky. Value stocks will certainly come back, but it makes sense to balance your holdings.

With that, here are 10 funds to consider seriously, not just for 1999 but for the long haul.

They are meant as core holdings, comprising mainly large-cap stocks. A typical personal portfolio should contain two or three core funds, plus at least one small-cap and one international fund.

How to pick a fund? Long-term performance is important, but so is risk — the severity of the fund's ups and downs over the years. I generally look for funds that have retained their managers for a long time, that carry little cash and have low turnover.

Also important: small expense ratios. My approach is similar to the one described in a fine new book, *But Which Mutual Funds?* by Steven Goldberg of Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine.

Most of the names below will sound familiar. I have mentioned them in the past. After all, a good fund isn't a flash in the pan.

The funds are listed with the phone number to call for a prospectus, plus average annual returns, according to Lipper Inc. — in most cases for the three years ending December 31, 1998. By way of comparison, the S&P returned 28.3%; the average stock fund, 14.5%.

Legg Mason Value Trust (three-year return, 41.1%). This fund is listed first for a reason: Its performance puts it in a class of its own, and that's no hype. Manager Bill Miller in 1998 beat the S&P for the eighth year in a row — massaged it, with a return of 48%. Despite its name, this isn't really a value fund in the traditional sense.

Miller's top two holdings, at last report, were Dell Computer Corp. (DELL) and America Online, Inc. (AOL), and the fund is 20% riskier than the market as a whole.

But, as *Value Line* puts it, he "searches for securities selling at a significant discount to the economic value of their underlying businesses," including Citigroup, Inc. (C) and Fannie Mae (FNM), part of a financial sector he expects to recover in 1999.

Miller holds shares for a long time; turnover averages just 15% annually, meaning that he keeps the typical stock more than six years. Only drawback: Expenses are in the 1.8% range, compared with an average of 1.3%. But that's a small price to pay to have Bill Miller doing your stock-picking.

Vanguard Total Stock Market Index (three-year return, 25%). An index fund simply buys all the stocks in one of the baskets that comprise the popular averages. It's managed by a computer, rather than a person.

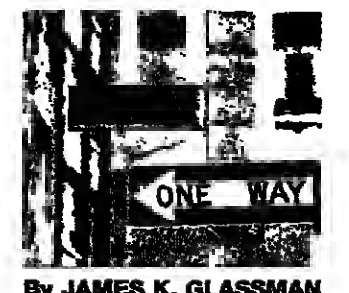
While Vanguard's fund that tracks the S&P 500 is now the largest in America, this one, which mimics the Wilshire 5000, an index that includes virtually all stocks, could be a better choice — if small and mid-cap stocks finally end their four-year swoon and catch up with large caps. Expenses are tiny (about 0.2%) and turnover practically nonexistent, so you won't run up big annual tax bills.

Guinness Flight Wired Index Fund. This is a brand-new fund, launched December 15, so there's no track record, but I am a huge fan. Since it's an index fund, you know what you're getting — no need to worry about quirky managers.

The fund holds a portfolio composed of the 40 stocks in the Wired Index, companies chosen by the hip high-tech monthly to serve as a bellwether for the new economy.

The emphasis is on technology, and the fund provides an excellent way to expose yourself to such Internet stocks as Amazon.com, Inc. (AMZN), the online retailer.

Ways of Wall Street



By JAMES K. GLASSMAN

and Yahoo Inc. (YHOO), the search-engine portal, in a diversified bundle that includes more traditional, but still innovative firms like AMR Corp. (AMR), parent of American Airlines, Inc., and principal owner of the Sabre computerized reservations system; Nucor Corp. (NUE), the mini-mill steel producer; Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (WMT); the Walt Disney Co. (DIS); and Schlumberger, Ltd. (SLB), oil service.

Dreyfus Disciplined Stock (three-year return, 27.8%). This is a solid, well-run, highly diversified fund that's a classic core holding. It keeps up with the S&P and whips its peers, with expenses under 1% and moderate turnover.

Manager Bert Mullins uses computer screening to find stocks that have a combination of low valuations and momentum, then applies human analysis of the companies' fundamentals. At last report, top holdings included Microsoft Corp. (MSFT), Coca-Cola Co. (KO) and General Electric Co. (GE) — hardly a shocking list, but it's a system that does the job very well.

Transamerica Premier Aggressive Growth (one-year return, 84.1%). A nice complement to Dreyfus, above, and TIAA/CRF, below, is this go-go fund about which I rhapsodized recently.

Manager Phil Trickett has placed a heavy bet on Amazon, but also owns a wonderful mix of stocks, from Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. (BRK) to small-cap

health care firms like Alternative Living Services, Inc. (ALI).

This is a concentrated fund, with five holdings representing three-eighths of the assets. While it was launched less than two years ago, I included the fund because Trickett has been running money extremely successfully for Transamerica, the giant insurance company, for a long time.

TIAA/CRF Growth & Income (one-year return, 30.5%). The world's largest private pension system, which provides for the retirement of two million employees of universities and similar non-profits, opened its funds to the public a little over a year ago, and so far, the results have been superb.

According to a longstanding TIAA/CRF strategy, Carlton Martin, the manager of Growth & Income, invests part of the fund (at least 20%) in the S&P index, and uses the rest to try to beat it — which he did in 1998 by nearly two points, an impressive achievement.

Bob Brinker, a sensible analyst who edits *Marketline* newsletter in Irvington, New York, recently recommended the fund, noting "low expenses and a high level of tax efficiency."

The fund emphasizes large-caps that provide moderate dividends, and the portfolio is a blend of value and growth, with money spread across all industries.

T. Rowe Price Dividend Growth (three-year return, 23.5%). This fund, managed by William Stromberg, invests in large-cap stocks that pay rising dividends — a strategy that results in a portfolio with an overall risk level that's one-third below average.

The fund is highly diversified, with both value and growth and no stock representing more than 2% of total assets; turnover is just 40%. Last year, the fund's performance was sub-par, with a return of 15%, but don't let that bother you — especially if you appreciate the income and stability that dividends provide. It should bounce back. Top holdings include Mobil Corp. (MOB) and Allied Signal, Inc. (ALD).

Janus Twenty (three-year return, 42.2%).

Scott Schoelzel is another manager who shows that concentrating a portfolio pays off big — or, as Mae West, as quoted by Warren Buffett, put it, "Too much of a good thing can be wonderful."

Schoelzel notched a 74% return in 1998 — best of the 100 largest funds — with such stocks as Dell, Microsoft, and drug companies

Pfizer, Inc. (PFE) and Warner Lambert Co. (WLA). His top seven holdings represent half his assets. Expect volatility from the fund, but also brilliant stock-picking and moderate expenses.

Fidelity Fund (three-year return, 27.5%). It was a comeback year for Fidelity. In 1998, Magellan returned 33.6%, and Contrafund, my own core holding, returned 31.5%; unfortunately, both are closed to new investors.

But the old flagship, Fidelity Fund, awaits with open arms. It returned 31% last year, on top of 32.1% in 1997.

Beth Terrana, the manager, buys name-brand large-caps, but she looks for turnaround situations, companies that can increase their profits by cutting costs and using their capital better rather than by boosting unit sales. Holdings include banks, drug stocks, Philip Morris Cos., Inc. (MO) and Wal-Mart.

Torrey Fund (three-year return, 24.2%). The ultimate value player, Bob Torrey had a rough year in 1998, scoring a return of just 8.2%. But no matter. He's in for the long haul, and he beat the S&P in five of the preceding six years.

Lately, Torrey likes satellite stocks and financials, though he's poking around amid the ruins of the oil and gas sector. His top holdings include SLM Holding Corp. (SLM), the student-loan specialist, and Hughes Electronics Corp. (GMI).

Torrey's expenses are about average — a good deal considering his genius at choosing stocks — but there's a \$10,000 minimum investment.

Enterprise Growth Portfolio (three-year return, 31.8 percent). The only fund among last year's five that's making a repeat appearance, Enterprise has finished in the top 20 percent of funds for the fourth year in a row. Manager Ron Canakaris looks for fast-growing companies whose stock (he hopes) is temporarily depressed. He also likes firms that can benefit from expansion in the global marketplace, like Coke, Procter & Gamble Co. (PG) and Johnson & Johnson (JNJ). He keeps a trim portfolio of about 40 stocks, with minimal turnover and only average risk.

Any one of these funds (or, better, two or three of them with different styles) gives you a good foundation for a long-term portfolio. So get started. Washington Post The writer is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Time appears right for digital video discs

By JOSEPH GELMAN

NEW YORK (Newsday) — Is DVD ready for prime time?

Retailers seem to think so. Pre-recorded movies on digital video discs are being featured as high-tech gifts at about 15,000 stores and a score of Internet sites.

And Hollywood has, after some hesitation, united behind DVD. The two last studio holdouts, Paramount and Fox, recently began adding their movies to the 2,500 titles currently available on DVD.

Now, it's up to consumers. Trade publication *Vision Business* reports that many observers see this first major effort to sell DVD to the public as "a make-or-break season for the format."

A million players have been shipped to stores, but only two-thirds have been purchased, analysts estimate. The current joint push by studios, manufacturers and retailers is aimed at moving the rest into living rooms.

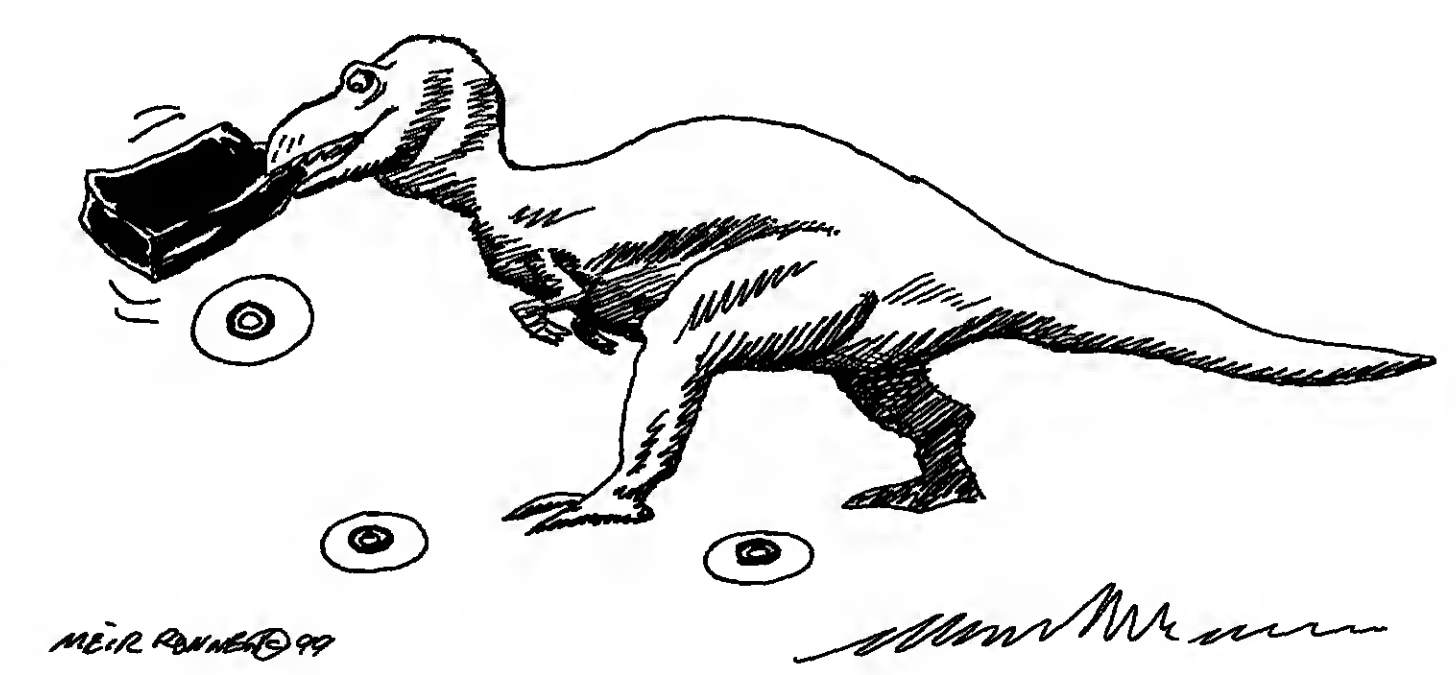
Warner Home Video, one of DVD's patent-holders and most fervent booster, warns that unless DVD's constituency grows at an exponentially faster pace, the multi-billion-dollar pre-recorded video business may eventually be overtaken and supplanted by digitally home-delivered pay-per-view movies from cable and satellite services.

Complicating DVD's attempt to attract a mainstream audience is a \$60 million advertising blitz by rival digital disc Divx (short for Digital Video Express).

Despite the hype, latecomer Divx offers fewer advantages than DVD, is available only at the stores of majority owner Circuit City and a couple of other retail chains, and is considered a longshot. But DVD supporters fear Divx as a spoiler that will confuse potential customers, leaving them unwilling to invest in either format.

Since its debut in February 1997, DVD has been most readily accepted by "early adopters," gadget-lovers who get a kick out of any new technology, and by home theater enthusiasts. The 13-centimeter digital video disc's biggest growth has come at the expense of the market for 30-centimeter laserdiscs, which have a base of about 3 million households.

For more than a decade, laserdisc, featuring top-quality prints of films with original theatrical screen shape and soundtrack, was the medium of choice for people who wanted to see their movies as close as possible to the way their makers intended.



MEIR RAVINER 99

A movie on DVD produces a picture twice as sharp as the videocassette version and is slightly higher quality than its laserdisc counterpart, as well as being less expensive, smaller and therefore, more convenient to handle and store.

At this point, DVD is replacing — or, in many homes, supplementing — laserdisc as the state-of-the-art video medium for collectors. Sales of laserdisc players have dwindled, but videophiles continue to rent and buy the 30-centimeter discs, whose extensive library, upward of 12,000 titles is unlikely to be matched anytime soon by DVD.

Hollywood is continuing to support the laserdisc community by releasing laserdisc editions of a new movie simultaneously with the videocassette edition. Laserdisc is expected to co-exist with the digital video disc for at least another five years.

Meanwhile, the DVD edition of a new movie — like *Godzilla* or *Lethal Weapon 4* — is, increasingly, available the same day as the cassette and laserdisc editions, for about \$20 to \$25.

The studios are also churning out older "catalog" titles on DVD, like *Gone With the Wind* and *Casablanca*.

Higher-priced special edition DVDs are becoming routine.

Miramax's *Good Will Hunting*, for instance, sells for \$35 to \$40, and features commentary by the director, 11 deleted scenes, a "making of" documentary and behind-the-scenes footage.

Most movies can be recorded on a single side of a DVD, while laserdiscs require two or more sides. Some DVDs offer a full-screen (pan-and-scan) version of a movie on one side, and a wide-screen (letterboxed) version on the other. You can jump to a favorite scene and even switch to another language. (Most Hollywood movies are dubbed and subtitled in several languages on DVD.)

A couple of dozen manufacturers make DVD players ranging in price from around \$300 for entry-level machines to more than \$1,000 for deluxe models. For the best performance, a player should have an S-Video output, as a minimum and, better yet, a component video output (used in professional gear, now available in consumer DVDs and TVs).

During this transition period, the smartest purchase for those who've been collecting laserdiscs and don't want to junk them is a combination DVD/Laserdisc player. The only company that makes them is Pioneer Electronics, for years the world's leading producer of

laserdisc players.

Pioneer makes a full line of DVD-only players, from the \$400 DV-414 to the \$2,000 Elite DV-09. Its best-selling model is DVD/Laserdisc player DVL-909, which sells for \$800. The DVL-909 is a first-class DVD player and automatically plays both sides of a laserdisc.

Only a handful of players — and 250 titles — are available for DVD's rival, Divx. A Divx player costs \$100 more than its DVD counterpart.

The extra money isn't spent on spiffier bells and whistles, but on an internal modem and circuitry. Users plug an extension wire from their phone line into the Divx player's modem jack.

Divx' main selling point is that it eliminates a return trip to the video store and late fees. You buy a Divx disc at a store or via the Internet for \$4.50, get to watch it for 48 hours. If you want to watch it again — or decide to buy it — you do your negotiating with the player's remote in an on-screen transaction and it "unlocks" the disc. While you're sleeping, Divx calls home once a month with a record of your transactions. And Circuit City bills your credit card.

Circuit City's databases track everything a Divx customer watches.

A Divx disc works only with the player to which it's registered, and can't be loaned to a friend, as a DVD disc can be.

The Divx disc is watchable only on a Divx player. But DVD discs are interchangeable — playable on a DVD or Divx machine, or even on a PC equipped with a DVD-ROM drive.

Divx got off to a late start this year, is available in far fewer venues than DVD, and has reportedly sold fewer than 40,000 players.

Some 500 Blockbuster stores sell and rent movies on DVD (and rent players). Following the lead of Wal-Mart, Kmart recently made a significant commitment to DVD. Kmart has reduced its videocassette inventory to make room for DVD players and discs in 2,100 stores.

Book and music site Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) is one of many new online dealers in video who are charging low prices to attract new customers. Amazon stocks 2,000 DVD titles and 60,000 videocassette titles.

Also selling, and in some cases renting, DVDs are: DVD Empire (www.dvdempire.com); VideoServe.com (www videoserve.com); Reel.com (www.reel.com); NetFlix.com (www.netflix.com); and Spruce.com (www.spruce.com).

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SPORTS

in brief

Caesarea golf

Harold Stutzen was in winning form over the weekend at Caesarea golf club, capturing two competitions on successive days. Together with Morris Sacks and Mai and Malca Geri, Stutzen's team won the Friday two best ball stableford tournament with a score of 86 points.

Stutzen's 43 points was the day's best individual score. One stroke behind with 85 points were Eran Reuveni, Roz Brodie, Rina Levy and Jules Cubumek. On 83 and third place were Faith Spector, Ziggy Meiteles, Elad Hasson and Dan Lichtenstein. In the K-C tournament on Saturday, another two best ball game, Stutzen again led his team of Dennis Goldstein, David Hilsenrath and Tal Bildman to first place with another 86 points. Stutzen's individual score this time was a five under par 41 points. Second place with 85 went to Tim Frenz, Dan Katzenelenbogen, Hadassah Alon and Sefi Halfon. Heather Chait

Duval moves closer to Woods, O'Meara

LONDON (Reuters) - David Duval moved closer to the top two in the world golf rankings with his victory in the US Tour's season-opening Mercedes Championship in Hawaii on Sunday.

The 27-year-old American began the event almost three full points behind leader Tiger Woods in the rankings but after his eighth victory in less than 18 months he is just 1.35 points off the lead.

Masters and British Open champion Mark O'Meara holds second place just 0.24 points clear of Duval. PGA champion Vijay Singh of Fiji finished fourth in Hawaii to move up two places to seventh.

Dokic gets wild card to Australian Open

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Rising Australian Jelena Dokic was given a wild card yesterday into the main draw for next week's Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the year.

The Yugoslav-born Dokic, 15 and the world's top-ranked junior, joined with Mark Philippoussis over the weekend to win the Hopman Cup mixed team title in Perth.

Though ranked just 341st in the world, she underlined her potential with wins over world No. 4 and reigning French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and No. 15 Sandrine Testud of France in Perth.

Dokic has been described as the best Australian women's tennis prospect since Evonne Goolagong Cawley, who won the second of her two Wimbledon titles in 1980.

India switch Pakistan tour Test venues

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Indian cricket chiefs have changed the venues of the two Tests on Pakistan's forthcoming tour which right-wing Hindu activists have threatened to disrupt.

The first Test will be in Madras starting on January 28 and the second Test in New Delhi starting on February 4, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said yesterday, quoting Indian cricket board sources.

"The dates remain the same but the venues have been interchanged," it said.

Under the original itinerary, the first Test was in New Delhi and the second at either Madras or Kanpur.

Pakistan are to make their first Test tour of India in more than a decade, though the arch rivals have met at one-day international level.

They are also due to play a third Test in Calcutta which would be treated as the first match of the inaugural Asian Test championship that also involves Sri Lanka.

English rugby fears chaos as Bristol plans takeover of London Scottish

BRISTOL (AP) - Second division leaders Bristol are threatening to cause chaos in English rugby by buying out Premiership club London Scottish and taking over their games for the rest of the season.

The move would effectively put Scottish out of business and leave many of its players with no one to play for.

According to Bristol's chief executive, Nick de Scossa, the club has made the unprecedented move because the governing body, the English Rugby Football Union, and the clubs' organization, English First Division Rugby, have refused to guarantee it promotion to the top flight.

"We are holding a loaded shotgun to the heads of these organizations and we're ready to fire it," he said.

"We would be buying a 100 percent shareholding in a limited company, and we hope to do this during the coming week."

"It will put us at the EFDR negoti-

ating table, and we will take over the other club's fixtures immediately. It is up to (Bristol's rugby director) Bob Dwyer to decide which (London Scottish) players he keeps and which ones he doesn't." De Scossa said that, if the deal went through, another club would take Bristol's place at the top of division two.

London Scottish president Ken Scobie said he did not know of any discussions on a takeover.

"There has been no discussion amongst all the shareholders on such a transaction and there has been no meeting among the directors to even contemplate such a transaction, far less the deal that appears to have been announced by Bristol," he said.

The RFU issued a brief statement saying it would begin an inquiry into Bristol's takeover plans.

"We will be discussing the matter today and making the relevant enquiries," the statement said.

Fairbrother steers England to victory

BRISBANE (Reuters) - Neil Fairbrother struck a characteristically resourceful 67 not out to carry England to a four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the triangular limited overs series yesterday.

Veteran left-hander Fairbrother showed his value in one-day cricket by holding England's innings together as they won with three balls of their 50 overs to spare, making 208 for six in reply to Sri Lanka's 207 for seven.

England have now won their first two games in the series, having beaten Australia on a faster run rate in a rain-hit match here 24 hours earlier.

The day-night encounter brought England up against off-spinner Muralitharan, who destroyed them with a 16-wicket haul in a one-off Test at The Oval last August.

The Sri Lankan slow bowler with the unusual action was also making his first appearance in Australia since being no-balled for throwing during his country's 1995-96 tour, though his action was subsequently ruled legal.

England's batting lineup was led by captain Alastair Cook, who scored 40 runs, and opener Nick Knight, who hit 40 off 53 balls, and Alec Stewart (24) with a stand of 59.

England's batting lineup was led by captain Alastair Cook, who scored 40 runs, and opener Nick Knight, who hit 40 off 53 balls, and Alec Stewart (24) with a stand of 59.

Muralitharan again posed problems for England's batsmen as he captured three for 34 in his 10 overs, including two wickets with the last delivery of his sixth over and the first of his seventh over.

That double strike checked England's smooth progress which was launched by openers Nick Knight, who hit 40 off 53 balls, and Alec Stewart (24) with a stand of 59.

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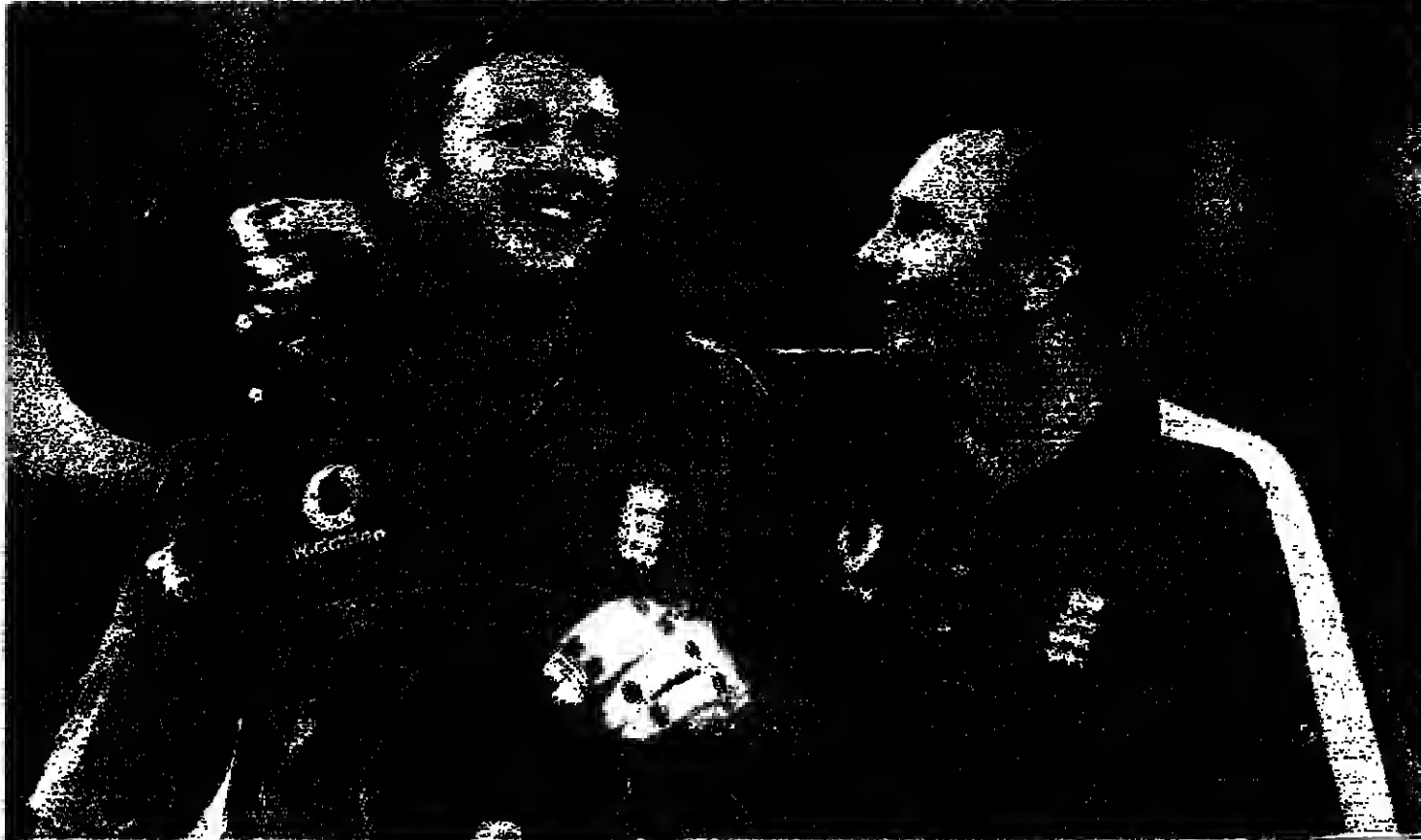
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RELIEF OF THE VICTORS - Robert Croft, who hit the winning runs for England, is hugged by Neil Fairbrother.

(Reuters)

cleared by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Muralitharan again posed problems for England's batsmen as he captured three for 34 in his 10 overs, including two wickets with the last delivery of his sixth over and the first of his seventh over.

That double strike checked England's smooth progress which was launched by openers Nick Knight, who hit 40 off 53 balls, and Alec Stewart (24) with a stand of 59.

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